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AN ENQUIRY AFTER HAPPINESS,

In several PARTS.

By the Author of *PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY*.

(R. Lucas, D.D.)

VOL. I.

Of the possibility of obtaining Happiness.

Κενὸς ἐκείνου φιλοσόφου λόγος, ὑφ' οὗ μηδὲν ἀνθρώπου πάθος θεραπεύεται, ὥσπερ γὰρ ἰατρικῆς οὐκ ὄφελος, μὰ τὰς νόσους ἐκβαλλούσης ἀπὸ τοῦ σωμάτων, οὕτως οὐδὲ φιλοσοφίας οἱ μὰ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς κακὸν ἐκβάλλῃ. Pythag. apud Stob. Serm. 80.

Qui quod tibi parum videtur Eruditus, ea Causa est quod nullam Eruditionem esse duxit, nisi quæ Beatæ vitæ Disciplinam juvaret. Cic. de Finib. Bonor. & Mal.

The Third Edition Corrected.

LONDON;
Printed for *S. Smith* and *B. Walford* at the Prince's Arms in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, and *Edw. Pawless* at the Bible in *Chancery-Lane*, MDCXCVII.

AN
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LONDON:
Printed for S. Smith and B. Walford at the Prince's Arms in St. Paul's Church-Yard, and Fleet-Street, at the Bible in Cheapside. MDCXC II.

To my Worthy Friend

Mr. William Powell,

Rector of *Llan-Wennarth*, &c.

My Dear Friend,

WHom neither thy Proſperity nor my Affliction has ever divided from me, it has ever been your good Fortune (and your Mind has ever been better than your Fortune) from the firſt day of our Friendſhip to ſtand upon the higher Ground, and to have always been doing Kindneſſes, and never needed any. I will confeſs, if you will pardon me, that I have ſometimes ſecretly repin'd at this your good Luck, and envied the Honour and the Pleaſure which this Advantage gave you; and can you blame me, ſince it excluded me from a ſhare in one of the moſt raviſhing Delights of

Friendſhip? You know what Attempts I have made to redeem this Inequality, but all in vain till now: Now I flatter my ſelf that I have found a Preſent to make you, that cannot provoke your Generoſity, tho it were nicer and more ſcrupulous than 'tis: I have now at length found a way to end moſt happily the only Difference that has ever been between us in an uninterrupted Friendſhip of near ſeventeen Years: You ſhall always be Fortunate, always able to do Kindneſſes, and be in need of none; and I will always ſtrive to vanquiſh and ſurmount all the Diſadvantages of my Fortune, and in deſpite of them find ſome way to expreſs my Affection, and return your Obligations. And thus, if I fall not ſhort of my Deſign, I ſhall be equal with you; for 'tis no ſmall Service I propoſe to do you, I will now be your Guide, I will conduct you, not as you

have done me (tho for that too I muſt ever thank you) through barren and impoveriſhed *Picardy*, but through all the Ways of *Pleaſantneſs*, and all the Paths of *Peace*; I will give you a ſight, not of *France*, but *Canaan*; I will make you a ſharer of that Immortality which I aſpir'd to, and bring you to that Heaven which is the Sacred Abode of Sacred Friendſhip, and Sacred Joys. What a dark Cottage, what a rude Heap will the now admired *Verſailles* then ſeem to you? But ſee whither I have ſuffer'd this Paſſion to tranſport me! How eaſy is it for one that follows the Conduct of Affection to be rather *Obliging* than *Diſcreet*? I had almoſt forgot how little you ſtand in need of theſe kind of Helps, being not only a ſufficient Guide to your ſelf, but a prudent and ſucceſsful one to others in the Way to Happineſs: However tho you need no Guide, I may ſerve you as the

Companion of your Journey, I may wake you in a Morning, I may oblige you to quicken your pace, I may entertain you with Reflections and Remarks upon the Country as we paſs, and ever and anon mind you of the Beauty and the Pleaſures of that Country we travel to: Theſe and ſuch-like Aſſiſtances the moſt Perfect need; theſe are the Offices of the trueſt Friendſhip; and theſe the Papers I ſend you, may, I hope, in ſome meaſure perform. Adieu,

Thy Affectionate

R. L.

TO THE READER.

IT has pleaſed God that in a few Years I ſhould finiſh the more pleaſant and delightful part of Life, if Senſe were to be the Judge and Standard of Pleaſure; being confin'd (I will not ſay condemned) by well-nigh utter Blindneſs to Retirement and Solitude. In this State Converſation has loſt much of its former Air and Briſkneſs: Buſineſs (wherein I could never pretend to any great Addreſs) gives me now more trouble than formerly; and that too without the uſual Diſpatch or Succeſs: Study (which is the only Employment left me) is clog'd with this Weight and Incumbrance, that all the Aſſiſtance I can receive from without, muſt be convey'd by anothers Senſes, not my own; which it may eaſily be believed, are Inſtruments, or Organs as ill fitted and as awkwardly managed by me, as wooden Legs or Hands by the Maim'd.

In this Caſe, ſhould I affect to procure my ſelf a decent Funeral, and leave an Honourable Remembrance of me behind; ſhould I ſtrug-

gle to rescue my self from that Contempt to which this Condition (wherein I may seem lost to the World, and my self) exposes me; should I ambitiously affect to have my Name march in the Train of those All (tho not all equally) great ones, Homer, Appius, Cn. Aufidius, Didymus, Walkup, Pere Jean l' Aveugle, *&c. All of them eminent for their Service and Usefulness, as well as for their Affliction of the same kind with mine; even this might seem almost a commendable Infirmity: for the last thing a Mind truly Great and Philosophical puts off, is the desire of Glory. Hence* Tacitus *closes his Divine Character of* Helvidius Priscus *thus,* Erant quibus appetentior fama videretur, quando etiam sapientibus cupido gloriæ novissima exuitur. *But this Treatise oweth neither its Conception nor Birth to this Principle: for besides that I know my own Insufficiency too well, to flatter my self with the hopes of a Romantick Immortality from any Performance of mine in this Ingenious and Learned Age; I must confess I never had a Soul great enough to be acted by the Heroic Heat which the love of Fame and Honour hath kindled in some.*

Tacit. *Hist.* l. 4.

——— Tuta & parvula laudo:

I have ever loved the Security and Content-

ment of Privacy and Retirement almoſt to the guilt of Singularity and Affectation.

But the truth is plainly this, the Vigour and Activity of my Mind, the Health and Strength of my Body (being now in the flower of my Age) continuing unbroken, unbent under this Affliction; I found that if I did not provide ſome Imployment that might entertain it, it would weary out it ſelf with fruitleſs Deſires of, and vain Attempts after its wonted Objects, and ſo that Strength and Vivacity of Nature which ſhould render my State more Comfortable, would make it much more Intolerable.

I confeſs my Zeal for Publick Good by the Propagation and Endearment of Divine Truths was leſs fervent in me, than could well become the particular Obligations of my Profeſſion, or the common ones which every Chriſtian in proportion to his Talents lies under; I was almoſt induced to believe, that this Chaſtiſement which had removed me from the Service of the Altar, did at the ſame time diſcharge me from all Duty owing to the Publick: But my good Friend Mr. Lamb *revived the dying ſparks of a decaying Zeal, and reſtor'd me to a proper ſenſe of my Duty in this Point; for whether by Deſign or by Providence governing Chance,*

Chance, I know not, (for he never seemed to addreſs or deſign the Diſcourſe particularly to me) he had ever and anon in his Mouth this Excellent Principle, That the Life of Man is to be eſtimated by its Uſefulneſs and Serviceableneſs in the World. *A ſober Reflection upon this wrought me up to a Reſolution ſtrong enough to contemn all the Difficulties which the Loſs of my Sight could repreſent to me in an Enterpriſe of this nature. Thus you ſee on what Principles I became engaged in this Work; I thought it my Duty to ſet my ſelf ſome Task which might ſerve at once to divert my Thoughts from a melancholy Application on my Misfortune, and entertain my Mind with ſuch a rational Employment as might render me moſt eaſy to my ſelf, and moſt ſerviceable to the World. Being now abundantly convinced that I am not releaſed from that Duty I owe that Body of which I am ſtill a Member, by being cut off from a great part of the Pleaſures and Advantages of it; therefore like one that truly loves his Country, when no way elſe is left him, he fights for it on his ſtumps: ſo will I even in the Remains of a broken Body expreſs at leaſt my Affection for Mankind, and breathe out my laſt Gaſp in their Service.*

The Fitneſs and Tendency of this Subject to ſerve theſe Ends is ſo apparent, that I will not im-

impertinently detain the Reader by a Juſtification of this Choice. How fit I am for it, will be beſt judged by the Performance; yet that this may not ſuffer any Diſadvantage from ſuch Prejudices with which the Conſideration of my State may eaſily prepoſſeſs Men, I think my ſelf obliged to obviate them by a word or two.

I have had ſo much Experience of all the ſeveral Pleaſures that Proſperity can afford Man in this Life, that I am ſufficiently capable of ſetting a true Rate and Value upon them, and of judging their Subſerviency to true Happineſs: And I am ſo well acquainted with Trouble and Affliction, that I am ſufficiently ſenſible, as of the Weakneſs of humane Nature and Miſery of this mortal State, ſo of the Neceſſity and Power of Vertue in relieving and ſupporting Man under both: And after all, my Mind lives now in the Body (like a Soul in a ſeparate State) retired as from the Pleaſures, ſo from the Troubles of the World, and is therefore the more able to paſs a free and more diſpaſſionate Judgment upon both.

It may probably be feared that the ſame ſhould befal me, which has many Monkiſh *Writers, who being much retired from the World, having much Leiſure and few Books,*

did

did ſpin out every Subject into wandring Mazes and airy Speculations; like Plants, which deſtitute of a well-manur'd and fat Soil, run all into the Exuberancy of Leaves and fruitleſs Sprigs: but the Commerce I ſtill maintain with the World, may in part prevent this Error, and the Nature of the Subject ſo fruitful of many neceſſary Enquiries, will of it ſelf lead me on to uſeful and profitable Thoughts.

There is one thing which may be by ſome objected againſt my manner of treating this Subject, the Freedom I uſe in it, being not altogether ſo common to my Profeſſion; but I hope it will not be found that I have abus'd the Liberty I have taken to the Diſparagement of the leaſt Truth of our Religion, or to the leaſt Diſcouragement of Vertue; and therefore I think it cannot juſtly reflect any Diſadvantage upon my Calling.

Beſides I have in a former Treatiſe, wherein I deſigned the ſame End, The Happineſs of Mankind, *treated this Subject in a manner ſuted to the Generality of Readers: but this Diſcourſe I deſign for ſuch who are not content to ſubmit to Inferences deduced from received Principles, unleſs they can be fairly convinced of the Reaſonableneſs and Truth of the Principles*

ciples themſelves: nor ſhould I think it any Crime, were I Maſter of ſuch Talents, if I did mingle with neceſſary Truths, all that Variety of Thought, all that Fineneſs and Briskneſs of Fancy which might render them as delightful as uſeful; the Example of God himſelf in the great Work of the Creation would juſtify this Liberty, who has created as well Leaves and Flowers, as Herbs and Fruit; and in the Variety and Beauty, in the Colours and Figures of all that he has produced, he appears plainly to have made proviſion not only to feed the Appetite, but even the Fancies of his Creatures.

There is after all, I confeſs, one thing that ſtands in need of an Excuſe, which is the publiſhing what ſhould come forth a juſt Treatiſe, by ſmall Parts. To this I may truly ſay, having laid together all the Materials I ſaw neceſſary to compleat this Diſcourſe, I found it grown unavoidably to that voluminous Bulk, that I took this Method partly out of compliance to the Eaſe of my Reader, but eſpecially in compliance to my own; for in my preſent Circumſtances I ſaw no other way to avoid that Confuſion which would inevitably have diſordered the Contexture of a long Diſcourſe, if I ſhould have charged my Memory with the Contrivance and Connexion of ſo many and various Parts at once: and I foreſaw that all the

Strength

Strength of my Mind, which ſhould be collected and united in the treating every ſingle Argument, would be unprofitably ſpent in diſtracted, divided, and imperfect Efforts.

The

The INTRODUCTION, *or a brief Scheme of the Deſign of the whole Work.*

TO inform Man what is his true and proper Happineſs, and to mark out before him the right Way to it, hath been, and ever muſt be the Aim of all Philoſophy, and all Religion: and yet ſo numerous have been and are the Diſputes on this Subject, and ſo ſeemingly inſuperable the Difficulties which encounter us in every way, that the *deſpair* of attaining Happineſs at leaſt in this World, ſeems almoſt as Univerſal as the *deſire* of it: And as Nature will never give o're the purſuit of it, ſo will Man never forbear the Tragical Complaints of his Diſappointments, and the raving Exaggerations of Humane Miſery. That therefore I may attempt at leaſt to treat this Subject ſatisfactorily, I will endeavour,

Sect. 1. To ſhew you, That Happineſs is not a meer airy and imaginary Notion, but is a real State, and really attainable; and that our Diſappointments and Unſucceſsfulneſs muſt be imputed to our ſelves: and this ſhall be the Work of this preſent Volume.

Sect. 2. To explain the Nature of Happineſs, to examine wherein it conſiſts, and what is the High-way to it: In which to proceed ſucceſsfully, I thought the plaineſt Method I could take would be this, To fix and define the Notion of the moſt abſolute

ſolute and compleat Happineſs, that ſo we might diſcern what it behoved us to aim it, and how near we could approach the Perfection of Happineſs. Now the moſt perfect Idea of Happineſs that the Mind of Man can frame, is this: *Happineſs is the State of a perfect Being in the unmix'd, uninterrupted, and eternal Enjoyment of the moſt perfect Pleaſure*; Such I conceive to be the Happineſs of God himſelf.

In this Definition there are three Parts which manifeſtly appear to be the Ingredients of a Divine Happineſs.

Firſt, Perfection of Being. *Secondly*, Freedom from Trouble. *Thirdly*, Eternal Enjoyment of the moſt perfect Pleaſure.

It's therefore now evident, that to diſcover the Nature of Humane Happineſs, and the way to it, I am obliged to diſcourſe,

1. *Of the Being of Man, and its Perfection.*
2. *Of Indolence, or freedom from Pain or Trouble.*
3. *Of Fruition, or the Enjoyment of Pleaſure.*

Each of which ſhall be the Subject of a diſtinct Volume. And becauſe there may ſome Queſtions ariſe of a more general Nature; ſuch as, Whether every Man's particular Happineſs ought to be dearer to him than the Happineſs of another; or whatever elſe can be imagined? *Secondly*, On ſuppoſal that an entire Happineſs cannot be attained; what part then of it ought to be preferr'd? and ſuch like; I will therefore,

Sect. 3. Aſſign a particular Volume for the Diſcuſſion of ſuch Queſtions, and the Eſtabliſhment of ſuch Inferences as will naturally reſult from the former Diſcourſes.

THE

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AN

An Enquiry after Happineſs.

SECT. I.

Of the Motives to this Enquiry, and of the Objections which may be form'd againſt it.

CHAP. I.

The Importance, the Neceſſity of it.

THE Deſire of Happineſs is the firſt, moſt Powerful, and moſt Univerſal Principle of Humane Actions: This moves the Prince and Peaſant, the Learned and the Idiot: Revelation and Reaſon take this for granted; all Laws, both Divine and Humane, propoſing our Happineſs as the ſole and ſufficient Motive to our Obedience. *The Importance of this Enquiry.*

But all this while, tho' all ſorts of Religion and Government do unanimouſly conſent in the Propoſal of this one general End; yet ſo great is the Diverſity (I may ſay Contrariety) in the Methods in which they purſue it, that it ſeems to imply the Diſcovery

of Happineſs, a Matter of no leſs Uncertainty than Importance; there being neceſſarily as great a Variety in the Opinions of Men about it, as in their Lives and Actions, or in the Forms of Religion and Government in the World: ſince all theſe ſeem, according to the different Judgments of Men, ſo many different Paths which lead to it.

And yet till I have fix'd the Notion of Happineſs, and found out what it conſiſts in, 'tis impoſſible I ſhould live rationally: How ſhall I ſteer the Courſe of my Life aright, when I know not what Port I would make? How ſhall my Actions tend to any Wiſe or Noble Purpoſe, when I have no Mark prefix'd 'em? till then I muſt live *extempore*, and act at random, I muſt abandon my ſelf to Wind and Tide, to Time and Chance.

Horat. *Quo me cunq; rapit tempeſtas, deferor hoſpes.*

Toſt by a Storm, for my Retreat I take
Whatever Shore th' unguided Bark can make.

In a word, till I have fix'd this Notion, and know what to aim at, Buſineſs will be but a Mechanic Drudging out of Life, and Study but a vain Amuſement of my Mind: Whereas

Whereas when all the Inclinations of Life and Soul ſhall have one uniform Bent and Tendency, when every Deſire of the Soul, and every Action of Life ſhall be a Step advancing in a direct Line towards Happineſs, when the Vigour and Activity of my Mind ſhall not be ſuſpended and fruſtrated by Incertainties and Fluctuation, nor deluded and loſt in wandring Errors and Deviations, but ſhall ever carry me ſtreight forwards towards my Journey's End; then certainly all my Labours will thrive and proſper, and my Progreſs will be great, tho' my Motion ſhould be but feeble and ſlow: Thus Plants whoſe native Vigour mounts ſtreight upwards, tho' their Bulk be leſs, yet their Height and Beauty is greater than theirs whoſe luxuriant Nouriſhment waſtes it ſelf in gouty Knots, and diſtorted Branches.

Having conſider'd this, I reſolv'd, that I could not ſpend my Time more Manly and Philoſophically, than in an Enquiry, what the Happineſs of Man is, and how attainable: Every Advance towards this is an Acceſſion to my Life and Being; and all Travail which doth not lead me on towards this End, is but ſo much of Life miſſpent and loſt: what a ſillineſs were it to load my Memory with Terms and Words, with nume-

rous Inſtances of Matters of Fact, to marſhal up in Order, Lines and Figures, to talk of unknown Seas and diſtant Shores, to tumble over each Page in Nature's Syſtem? What trifling cunning to skill the gainful Myſteries of Trade? What ſolemn and laborious Foppery to penetrate into all the Subtilties of Government, and Arts of Converſation? If after all I have no Receipt for a troubled Mind, no Cure for diſtempered Paſſions: if I have no Principle to ſupport my Mind under a ſinking Fortune, or govern it in a riſing one; if I have nothing to arm me againſt my Fears, or to diſperſe my Griefs; wou'd any one think I had ſpent my Time well, or ſtock'd my ſelf with uſeful Knowledg?

But to find out what would make me happier, to find out what would free my Mind from the ſlavery of uneaſy Paſſions, what would make it ſerene, ſteady, great and manly in all the Accidents of Life: This every Man ſees at the firſt bluſh to be a wiſe, generous and ſerviceable Employment of my Reaſon. This,

Æque pauperibus prodeſt, locupletibus æque,
Æque neglectum pueris ſenibuſq; nocebit.

The

This Learning Rich and Poor alike do need,
And its Neglect do certain Ruin breed,
To Old and Young alike.

This occaſion'd St. *Auſtin*'s Ingenious Reflection on the Polytheiſm of the *Romans*: When he conſidered that they worſhipped *Felicitas*, (by which they meant that Deity that could confer Happineſs upon Men) he could not but wonder, why this was not the moſt Antient of all their Gods; or why, when this Deity was found out, they did not preſently diſcard the other idle Multitude of ſuperfluous and unneceſſary Gods; ſince this alone was ſufficient to ſupply all the Neceſſities, and gratify all the Deſires and Appetites of Mankind.

The Neceſſity of this Enquiry for the Redreſs of Humane Miſery.

But tho' Happineſs ſhould be a Project too great, too ambitious for a poor ſilly Mortal; yet ſure the Redreſs of thoſe Evils which oppreſs our State and Nature, is ſuch an humble and modeſt Deſign as may well become the meanneſs of Men; and therefore if I could not excuſe the Confidence or Preſumption of this Enquiry, by pleading the innate Deſire of Happineſs, yet ſure I might by urging the multitude of thoſe Evils which infeſt Humane Life, which 'tis not only irrational but impoſſible ſo far to yield and ſubmit to, as not to ſtruggle to free our

ſelves from 'em, or endeavour to lighten their afflicting Weight, or ſtudy to prevent 'em: This I confeſs was the firſt, and none of the leaſt prevalent Arguments that engag'd me; I love my ſelf, and would be, if not happy, at leaſt not miſerable, and I am neither inſenſible nor fearleſs; I know the common Portion of Man, and I cannot ſo far flatter my ſelf as not to apprehend approaching Evils; nor am I naturally ſo hard and tough, as not to ſhrink and gall under the weight of them: and I ſuppoſe moſt Men are of the ſame Nature with me, and as liable as I am to all the Evils of Time and Chance: and conſequently this one Conſideration of Human Miſery ought to work very powerfully in us, and effectually oblige us to this ſtudy.

Ariſtotle's Definition of Man, that he is a Rational Creature, is flat and heavy in compariſon to that of *Apuleius* the witty, tho' diſſolute *Platonic*.

* *Men, the Inhabitants of Earth, are endow'd with Speech, and vaunt of Reaſon; immortal are their Souls, mortal their Limbs, inconſtant and anxious are their Minds, brutiſh and obnoxious are their Bodies; unlike are they in their*

* Homines Ratione plaudentes, oratione pollentes, immortalibus animis, moribundis membris, levibus & anxiis mentibus, brutis & obnoxiis corporibus, diſſimilibus moribus, ſimilibus erroribus, pervicaci audaciâ, pertinaci ſpe, caſſo labore, fortunâ caducâ, volucri tempore, tardâ ſapientiâ, citâ morte, querulâ vitâ terras incolunt. *Apul.* de Deo *Socr.*

their Manners, like in their Errors; ſturdy is their Confidence, and obſtinate their Hope, fruitleſs their Toil, uncertain their Fortune, ſwift their Tears, and ſlow their Wiſdom, ſpeedy their Death, and their Life full of Plaints.

Thus miſerable is our State; and ſhall we now ſit down, and only childiſhly bewail our ſelves? Shall we ſink under the Weight of theſe Evils, by adding to 'em one heavier than 'em all, *Deſpair?* Shall we think the Thread of Evils is ſo cloſely and fatally wove into one Piece with the Thread of Life, that no Wiſdom, no Induſtry can prevent 'em? That no Philoſophy (how Divine ſoever) can divide or ſeparate the one from the other? and conſequently never think of any other than that one Univerſal Remedy of *Virgil, Patience?*

——Fortuna omnis ſuperanda ferendo eſt.

Ah wretched Nature! ah too helpleſs State!
If nought but ſuffering can o'recome our Fate?

No, no, let others do what they will, I'll never thus abandon my ſelf, I will not tamely and daſtardly renounce my Hopes of Happineſs, I'll ſtudy and contend for it whilſt I have a Being; whate'r Calamities

assault me, they shall find me ready arm'd from Head to Foot, nor shall they ever gain o're me an easy Victory; Death it self, when e're it comes, shall find me struggling to the last for Life, Eternal Life and Happiness: nor can I entertain so unworthy a Thought of the most perfect Being, but that he loves this Resolution where e're he meets it, and will be most ready to assist his Creatures in so just and rational an Endeavour.

CHAP. II.

Objections against this Enquiry.

FIRST, Happiness too Divine a State for Man to aspire after.

Secondly, The utmost Happiness of this Life, so trifling and inconsiderable, that it cannot recompense our Time and Travail.

Thirdly, There is no need of Study or Enquiry after Happiness; Nature and Custom being the best Guides to it.

Fourthly, The great Variety there is in the Nature of Men, and consequently in their Happiness, abundantly refutes all Attempts of this nature, and demonstrates it impossible either to frame one uniform Notion

tion of humane Happineſs, or preſcribe any conſtant and general Rules for the Attainment of it.

But as the *Iſraelites* when they march'd in Arms to take poſſeſſion of the Promiſed *Land*, were told of Sons of *Anak*, Gigantick Enemies, and Cities walled and fenced up to Heaven; ſo ſhall I, or any Man who goes about to poſſeſs himſelf of ſo great a Bleſſing as Happineſs, be diſcourag'd by worldly and ſenſual Men, with the Toil we are to undergo, with the Difficulties we are to encounter, and generally with Repreſentations of the Folly and Raſhneſs of the Attempt. Theſe muſt indeed be contemn'd and ſlighted, but it muſt be upon rational Grounds, and therefore I muſt conſider their Weight and Strength before I proceed.

Various is the working of humane Fancy; they that will pretend to be acute and wiſe above the vulgar part of Mankind (for ſuch are always apt to deſpiſe Speculation and Learning) look upon Happineſs as too Divine and Glorious a State for ſo mean a Creature as Man to affect; it was the not only vain but ſinful Ambition of our Firſt Parents to aſpire to the Likeneſs of God, *Ye ſhall be as Gods*; and what can be more truly the Prerogative and peculiar Poſſeſſion

Object. 1. Happineſs too Divine a State for Man to aſpire after.

Gen. 3.

of

‖ Omnis enim per ſe Divûm natura neceſſe eſt,
Immortali ævo ſummâ cum pace fruatur,
——Privata dolore omni, privata periclis
Ipſa ſuis pollens opibus. *Lucr.*

of God than Happineſs? Or what can make us more ‖ like God? To affect this therefore were the Folly of thoſe Earth-born Creatures in the Poet, which ſacrilegiouſly invaded Heaven, let us be content with the Portion of Man, and reſt ſatisfied with thoſe eaſy and obvious Pleaſures which beſt ſute this imperfect Nature and imperfect State.

I know not how well ſome may pleaſe themſelves with this ſort of Talk; but this is plain to me, theſe Men are contradictious to themſelves, and their Philoſophy to all true Reaſon: for notwithſtanding this affected debaſing of humane Nature, the Tranſports of theſe Voluptuaries are as bold and ambitious as thoſe of the haughtieſt *Stoick*; and 'tis no ſtrange thing to hear an *Epicurean* boaſt of a Parity or Equality with his *Jupiter* in the Point of Happineſs or Pleaſure. But to anſwer the Objection in a word: be the Nature of Mankind what it will, I do readily confeſs, that it were, if not a ſinful, yet a vain Ambition for Man to affect any other Happineſs than what is ſutable to his Nature; for it were to purſue what he were not capable of, it were like the Folly of *Semele* in the Poet, when ſhe deſir'd that ſhe might be entertain'd by *Jupiter*,

piter, not only with the Passion of a Lover, but the Glory and Majesty of a God, and so being fatally successful in her Wish, she perished in the Embraces she had so proudly begg'd: This therefore we readily grant, Happiness is a State of Pleasure, and Pleasure is the Result of the Proportion and Agreeableness of the Object to the Capacity or Appetite; so that he that aspires to a State of Happiness that infinitely exceeds his Nature, foolishly doats on Contradictions, and affects a Happiness devoid of Pleasure; or which is all one, covets a Pleasure which he cannot enjoy. And thus this *Epicurean* Objection vanishes into Air and nothing.

As to that Charge of Sacrilege and impious Boldness, which is insinuated in the Objection against our Ambition for Happiness, when it is remember'd that we propose no Happiness, but what the Make and Frame of our Nature qualifies and capacitates us for, and consequently the God of Nature design'd us; it will be easily granted that God does not only allow of, but direct and delight in Man's Endeavours after Happiness: Those Faculties and Capacities with which he has endow'd him, being the fairest Declaration of the Divine Will in this Point.

There

Object. 2. *Happiness here too trifling to requite much Toil.*

There are others of that sluggish and brutish Temper, that being unable to raise their Conception above Sense, or discover any Charm in a Rational and Philosophical Pleasure, they seem to despise that Happiness the wise and religious part of Mankind professs to seek after, and to think all the Pleasure Man can enjoy, so little, that 'tis scarce worth the while to take much Pains for it.

It is true, I am but Man, that is, a little Atom in the vast bulk of Matter, and my Life is but a short Moment in an endless stream of Time: but then I feel a strange kind of Comprehensiveness in my Soul, it stretcheth forth it self to Times past and to come, it enjoys things that are not seen, by Faith and Hope, and sometimes things that are not at all, by Memory and Fancy; and tho my Life be but a Moment, Satisfaction and Pleasure hath its Degrees; and therefore if I can possess it in its Height and Perfection, I shall live much, tho not long, I shall enjoy Eternity in a Moment, the World in a little Globe. Nor is this mere Fancy and Romance: for when I read St. *Austin* so far inflam'd with the Love of true Philosophy by *Cicero*'s Book *ad Hortensium*, that he presently abandons all the luscious Pleasures of his Pagan Conversation for the sake of those which he should afterwards find in

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a Philoſophical Life; when I find *Cicero* in, ſurely, a holy Raviſhment of Soul, preferring *one Day ſpent according to the Precepts of Vertue, before a ſinful Immortality*; and the Pſalmiſt almoſt in the ſame Words as well as the ſame Paſſion, *One Day in thy Courts is better than a thouſand*; I cannot chuſe but think there are irreſiſtible Charms and Beauties in Vertue, and Pleaſures in true Philoſophy as raviſhing as they are pure and ſacred: and who then can reſtrain himſelf from the glowing Deſires of, and reſolute Endeavours after a ſhare in them? When I have read *Socrates* dying with a generous Charity, and ſerene Hopes, and with an undiſturbed Mind, eaſily parting with all here below; when I have read of *Simeon* waiting for, and expecting Death, as weary Labourers do the Evening-Shades, or Hirelings the Reward of their Work; when I read St. *Paul* with humble Impatience expreſſing his devout Deſire of Death and Diſſolution; when I have ſeen ſome (as ſome I have ſeen) ſetting in Calm, and Majeſty, and Triumph, as if they had attended Death, as the old *Romans* once did the barbarous *Gauls*, in their Chairs and Robes; when I have ſeen Men die, not only with Content, but almoſt in an Ecſtaſie, and the Soul breath'd forth not in a Groan, but an Ejaculation; Pſal. 84.

lation; I must needs say I could not chuse but wish with *Balaam*, *That I might die the Death of the Righteous, and that my Latter End might be like his.* These are Degrees of Happiness which I should judg it reasonable to purchase at any rate, whatever there be hereafter; a smooth, contented, delightful Life, such as would not only bear but invite Reflections on it, a chearful, lightsom Death, able to make the Living in love with it.

Numb. 23.

But after all, whether this present Life be all my Portion, whether I die all of me together with my Body, or whether this Life be only the Time of our Probation and Preparation for another, and Death be nothing but the rough Passage from one Shore to another, or the Horizon that parts the Hemisphere of Darkness from that of Light, is a Question I will not now determine; 'tis sufficient to propose it here as a Doubt, whereof one side or other must be true. If therefore this Life be in order to Eternity, it nearly imports me to consider my present Relation to a future State; if it be not, then this Life, call it what you please, a Span, a Dream, or a Bubble, yet is it my *All*, and I must make the most of it. But,

Object. 3. *There is no need of Study or Enquiry after Happiness, Nature and Custom being the best Guides to it.*

Are not *Nature* and *Custom* the best Guides to Happiness? What needs there so much poring to find out that which Instinct leads

us

us to? We do not ſee that the moſt Learned Clerks are always the moſt happy Men; let ſuch demonſtrate the Truth of their Philoſophy by their own Succeſs: And thus they magnify Nature, not out of any Honour they deſign to do it, or the Author of it, but that they may with the greater Security contemn the one, and deprave the other by ſluggiſh Luxury and unbridled Luſt.

I am not eaſily tempted to a Contempt of Nature, or of Cuſtoms; for by the one I ſhould ſeem injurious to God, who is the Author of Nature; and by the other I ſhould prove injurious to Mankind, whoſe concurrent Senſe and conſtant Practice creates a Cuſtom. Therefore as to the former part of the Objection, were it but once truly determin'd what were to be underſtood by *Nature*, this Objection would vaniſh: I think our Souls within us may be juſtly ſuppos'd to conſtitute a Part of our Nature as well as our Bodies; and therefore I cannot be content that the Body, much leſs vicious Habits (commonly call'd indeed a ſecond Nature) ſhould uſurp the Name and Authority of Nature; nor conſequently can I be content to allow the mere ſenſual Appetites of the Body, much leſs the Dictates of vicious Habits, for the Laws of Nature. The Body indeed is an Eſſential Part of our Nature,

ture, but then it must be remembred 'tis not the Governing part; and therefore its Instinct cannot arrogate to it self the Authority of a Law. It remains therefore that tho the Rational Soul within us be but a part of our Nature, yet being the better part, the *ruling* part, its Dictates must have the force of *Laws*; so that the Law of Nature will be nothing else but the Commands of Right Reason. I shall be most ready to grant, that we ought to follow the Conduct of our Nature, taking it in this sense, *Beate vivit qui secundam eam partem animæ vivit quam dominari in homine fas est*, he indeed lives happily who follows the Conduct of that part to which belongs the undoubted Right of Soveraignty and Dominion in Man.

Aug. contra Academicos.

As to the latter part of this Objection, which sets up Custom, that it may exclude Philosophy: by *Customs* is commonly meant those Principles and Practices which are generally receiv'd and fashionable in the Place we live; I have a just Veneration for whatever is the sense of Mankind, but I think their Suffrage is not to be taken by Number, but by Weight: nor are we to follow the Opinion or Example of the most, but of the best: nor indeed is it possible to understand what is the Sense of Mankind in this Point;

for

for we have Cuſtom againſt Cuſtom, Nation againſt Nation, and Religion againſt Religion.

It ought farther to be conſider'd, That Principles taken upon truſt have ſeldom an equal Influence upon us, with thoſe which we take up on ſtrict Examination and mature Deliberation; that Men will eaſily be tempted to deſert thoſe for which they have no better Authority than the Vote of a Multitude: Nor can any thing tend more to the Diſparagement of any Perſwaſion than this, that 'tis not the Reſult of our Judgment but our Fortune; or to the Diſhonour of any Religion than this, that 'tis magiſterially obtruded by the Authority of Laws and Terror of Force, and will not ſubmit it ſelf to the Trial of ſober Philoſophy: and ſo I take it to be a Credit to the Chriſtian Religion, that it did not force Aſſent, but gain it by irreſiſtible Arguments; that it is ſo far from ſhunning the trial of Impartial Philoſophy, that it did always invite Men to a ſober Examination of its Evidence; and commanded its Diſciples, *Be ready to give an Anſwer to every Man that asketh you a Reaſon of the Hope that is in you.* 'Tis true indeed, as the Caſe now ſtands, Religion may, nay muſt be recommended by Authority of Law and Cuſtom, and ingratiated by particular Prac- 1 Pet. 3.

tice of it, but afterwards muſt grow up and be confirm'd by Reaſon, like a tender Plant that is firſt fix'd by the help of another's hands, but afterwards it ſtands firmeſt upon its own Roots: and this Method our Saviour himſelf did ſometimes make uſe of, when either the Stupidity of Nature, or Prejudice of Education rendred thoſe to whom he addreſſed his Doctrine uncapable of entring into a thorow Examination of it; *Then if any Man will do my Will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God.*

Laſtly, To truſt to others who themſelves, with like Raſhneſs and Credulity do truſt to others in the matter of the higheſt moment of my Life, ſeems to me inconſiſtent with common Prudence, with the very Conſtitution of a rational Nature: for what uſe can be as much fancied of Reaſon, if I ſlight its Service in ſo important an Affair as this?

It is true, Temper, Fortune and Education have *de facto* ſo great a ſhare in the Happineſs or Miſery of ſome kind of Men eſpecially; that I muſt not yet diſmiſs this Objection till I have taken a little notice of ſuch for whoſe Defence and Service it was at firſt found out: Theſe are,

Firſt, The ſtupid and brutiſh part of Mankind, theſe ſeem to have met with Happi-

neſs

neſs whilſt they ſeek it not: their Fancies flat, their Proſpect ſhort, and their Deſires few and eaſy, and conſequently if their Pleaſures be not rais'd, neither are their Troubles deep; Time and Chance happen to 'em, and they bear the one, and wear out the other without any very melancholy or tender Reſentments; Stupidity in them outdoes all the Habits of Philoſophy in others, and want of Senſe makes them laugh more loudly, live more ſecurely, and die more unconcernedly than the acuteſt and thoughtfulleſt of Men can.

Were the Incapacity of theſe Men great enough to juſtify their Contempt of Reaſon and Religion, I ſhould almoſt be tempted to call them happy: but at the ſame moment I ſhould deſpiſe their Happineſs; * for I cannot call thoſe happy, whate're their Enjoyments be, whoſe Souls are too ſluggiſh and drowſy to underſtand or reflect upon their Happineſs: Or if I muſt call this Happineſs, 'tis the Happineſs of a Beaſt, not of a Man; with me to live is ſomewhat greater than to feed and reſt, and to be happy muſt be much more than to live. The Extream to theſe are,

* Non ideo tamen quiſquam felicia dixerit, quibus non eſt rectus intellectus. *Senec.* de Vit. Beat.

Secondly, The Gay, the Gaudy, the Modiſh, the Unthinking part of Mankind; theſe in their own Opinion, and truly in the

Opinion of the World (moſt Men being either Flatterers or Enviers of their good Luck) may pretend to Happineſs: and if their Pretence be well founded, their way to Happineſs is a more ready, plain, and compendious one than any that ever was, or ever will be diſcover'd.

But alas, ſhortneſs of Sight cannot paſs with me for Wit, nor an unthinking Confidence for Wiſdom; I have ſeen moſt of thoſe Dreams the World can preſent the gayeſt Fancy with, and upon the utmoſt of my Trial, I have perhaps found ſomething that could divert my Fancy, nothing that could ſatisfy a Rational Soul. I will not here examine what is the Imployment, what the Pleaſure proper to a Rational Being: nor will I now go about to ſhew, that that Mind can enjoy no ſober or laſting Peace, much leſs Pleaſure, which is engag'd in ſuch a Method of Life as it cannot give a good account of, or rationally juſtify to it ſelf; both which Conſiderations would be plain Refutations of this gay Objection: 'tis enough in this place to ſay that this ſort of Life is repugnant to thoſe Principles which Religion reveals, which Reaſon ſeems readily to embrace, and which are back'd by all the Authority which the unanimous Approbation of the wiſeſt and beſt part of Mankind

kind can give 'em. It behoves us therefore not to abandon our ſelves to this kind of Life, till we have narrowly diſcuſs'd and try'd theſe Principles; for if they ſhould prove true, then will this ſenſual, careleſs Life betray us to a miſerable Eternity: and tho they ſhould be falſe, yet till we are upon Rational Grounds convinc'd that they are ſo, we have little Reaſon to commit our Happineſs to ſo great a hazard, where the Odds are very great againſt us, that we are in the wrong.

It remains notwithſtanding all theſe Objections, that it behoves every Man to purſue his Happineſs by a Rational Enquiry after it, neither undervaluing Human Nature or its Happineſs, nor giving up himſelf to the guidance of the brutiſh and blind part of him, but ſeriouſly and thorowly to examine whatever End be propos'd to him as his Happineſs, or whatever Method be propos'd to him as the way to it: but when we have blown off theſe not formidable Objections againſt this Enquiry, but looſe and wanton Excuſes of the neglect of it, there are others yet that ſeem by a fairer ſhew of Reaſon to deter us from it by the difficulty and unſucceſsfulneſs of the Attempt.

Object. 4. *The great Variety there is in Man; and consequently his Happiness explodes these Attempts.*

Happiness (say they) is like *Proteus* in the Poet, it puts on so many different Forms and Shapes, that it seems impossible to circumscribe it within general Rules, or to represent it under any one fixt, definite and single Notion or Idea; and it deserves well to be examin'd, what Weight or Truth there is in the Vulgar Notion of Happiness, That for a Man to be happy is nothing else but to live according to his Fancy: and it seems no less absurd to invite every Man to the same Heaven, or gratify every Humour by the same kind of Happiness, than to entertain all Appetites with one and the same Dish.

But as in that great variety of Complexion, Feature, Shape and Motion, and in that great diversity of Capacities and Endowments which we behold in Men, there is yet one common Nature wherein they all agree, whereby they are constituted Creatures of the same Species; just such accidental Varieties may the Happiness of Man be capable of, and yet the Life and Being, the Soul and Substance of it may be one and the same, and consequently may be comprehended under general Rules. And if this Answer were not sufficient, it would not be absurd to say, that Happiness like Beauty may put on various Dresses, and yet be still charming

and

and delightful in each; or that this Bread, like that of Heaven (for ſo the Rabbins tell us of *Manna*) has that in it which gratifies every Palate; there are Soveraign and unallay'd Bleſſings, ſuch as *Life*, *Perfection*, *Indolence*, &c. which take with every Appetite, and are univerſally welcom'd to all the Sons of Men. Or I may truly ſay, That Happineſs muſt not only be prepared and fitted for Man, but Man for his Happineſs; he muſt become a Rational Creature e're he can enjoy a Rational Pleaſure: 'tis from this want of Preparation that diverſity of Opinions concerning Happineſs ſprings, which is ſo univerſal a Diſcouragement. For,

It cannot be deny'd but that the Opinions of Men concerning Happineſs have been and are extreamly various: All the different Sects of Philoſophy and Religion being ſo many different Paths which the differing Apprehenſions of the Minds of Men have mark'd out to Happineſs. I have no undervaluing Thoughts of the Abilities of Mankind, or overweening Opinion of my own; I cannot think my ſelf clearer ſighted, nor can I promiſe that I ſhall be more fortunate or more induſtrious in my ſearch than others; this is my Comfort, that my miſcarrying in this Attempt is more honoura-

ble, than Succeſs in a trifling and impertinent one——

——*Magnis tamen excidit auſis.*

Nor can I think that Uncertainty, which this Diverſity of Opinions ſeems to imply, ſufficient to deter any wiſe Man's Enquiry; no ſick Man in his Wits will renounce the Deſires or Hopes of a Cure, becauſe Phyſicians differ in their Opinions about the Method of it: the ſtudy of Philoſophy has never been utterly forſaken, tho that of one Age baffle and o'rethrow that of another; and yet even this again ſtands rather upon the Weakneſs and Obſcurity of the former, than its own Strength or Evidence. The *Academies* do not ſeem to have entertain'd ſo groſs an Abſurdity as ſome have fancy'd, when they taught that Wiſdom conſiſted in the ſearch of Truth, even at the ſame time when they believ'd that it could not be fully found out: for where Certainty cannot be had, it is not unreaſonable to follow the faireſt Probabilities. And if this were rationally practiſed in any Study, certainly much more in that of Happineſs; ſince the Neceſſity of this Study above any other doth more indiſpenſibly oblige us to it: for all Labour and Learning that promotes not the great End of

Hap-

Happineſs is to no purpoſe, ſince we are ne're the better for't; for to be the better, and to be the happier for't is all one.

But there is no reaſon why we ſhould take up with theſe cold and lifeleſs Anſwers which will ſatisfy none, but thoſe who are extreamly well inclin'd: we may now boldly ſay, the Difficulties that former Ages met with, are of no force now to deter us; we can now free our ſelves from the diſtracting Terrors of an inviſible Power without baniſhing him out of that World which himſelf created; we can now prove a Judgment to come without the Aſſiſtance of Poetic Dreams; and the Exiſtence of Souls after Death, without their Pre-exiſtence before our Birth: To be ſhort, we have now Revelation for our Rule, and every good Man a Divine Spirit for his Guide; nay, every Man (if he be ſincere) in ſuch Enquiries as theſe. *If any of you lack Wiſdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him.* James 1. So that now we may very rationally conclude, that fatal Ignorance or fatal Error in this Point muſt be imputed either to a lazy and ſottiſh Contempt of that Knowledg we are moſt nearly concern'd in, and the Means conducing to it, or to an obſtinate Reſiſtance of that Conviction which God endeavours to beget

beget in us by his Word and his Spirit, or at leaſt to the want of that juſt Conſideration we ought to allow to reveal'd Truths, or of that neceſſary Preparation which fits us for Divine Aſſiſtance, and enables us to underſtand the Divine Will; and for this reaſon the Diſſenſions and ſharp Contentions of Chriſtians ought to be no Prejudice to the Authority or Perſpicuity of Revelation, or to the Aſſertion of the Spirit's Conduct and Aſſiſtance: for beſides that Unity of Faith is an Unity of Fundamentals, not of Fancies, it muſt be confeſſed that our Sects and Diviſions have their Riſe and Propagation from theſe and ſuch like Cauſes; nothing being more common than that Mens Tempers, and Complexions, and Educations, and Intereſts and Paſſions ſhou'd give a Biaſs to their Judgments, and a Tincture to their Tenet sand Opinions: it is eaſy to ſee that the Errors of ſome are the Dreams of a drouzy Careleſneſs; of others, the Wandrings of a wanton Confidence; of others, the crooked Windings of deſigning Intereſt, and ſo on: for it may with much truth be affirm'd, that all erroneous Philoſophy in Matters neceſſary and fundamental, is the Reſult of ſome unworthy Luſt and Paſſion: But all theſe Matters, namely, the uſe of Revelation and God's Spirit, the Vanity of all

Objecti-

Objections form'd againſt Religion from Diſſenſions about it, the Difficulties the Heathens were to encounter in their Enquiries after Happineſs, *&c.* ſhall be more fully treated of in their proper places.

Thus I think I have in this Section, *1ſt*, Sufficiently evinced the Importance and Neceſſity of an Enquiry after Happineſs, ſince 'tis impoſſible to ſteer the Courſe of Life aright, without a clear knowledg of that which ought to be the End, the Centre of all our Deſires and Endeavours, that is, *Happineſs*: without this 'tis not only impoſſible to be happy, but, what ought ſeriouſly to be weighed, impoſſible not to be miſerable. *2dly*, I have cleared this Undertaking from thoſe Objections with which it is generally aſſaulted. Let us not therefore ſo far diſparage and undervalue Humane Nature, or diſhonour the Authors of it, as ever once to fancy that Happineſs is too great for us, or we too little for it; or that God ſhould diſallow, as a Sacrilegious Ambition, the moſt rational Attempts of a rational Creature, I mean thoſe of becoming happy: ſince we ſeek no other Happineſs than what the Make and Frame of Nature, and conſequently the God of Nature, appears plainly to capacitate us for, and deſign us to; the greatneſs of which nothing

thing can ſo well expreſs as the Tranſports and Raptures of happy Men.

But let us not think this Happineſs ſo eaſy a Purchaſe, that it will run into the Lap of the Sluggiſh, or proſtitute it ſelf to the Embraces of ſenſeleſs brutiſh Luſt. No, no, nothing but induſtrious Reaſon, pure and vigorous Philoſophy, can e'er attain it: The Sluggard or the Wanton, the Fool and Vain, may have ſome fits of Eaſe and Mirth; only the Rational, only the Philoſopher can poſſeſs true and laſting Happineſs: Nor let the endleſs Quarrels, the numerous Contentions of vain and proud Pretenders, diſcourage us from following the Conduct of Reaſon and Revelation; theſe are the Contentions of Luſt, not Philoſophy. Truth and Happineſs (as ſome have lately fancy'd of Love) inhabit a Palace, into which none can enter, but humble, ſincere, and conſtant Lovers.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of the Attainableneſs or Poſſibility of Happineſs in this Life.

CHAP. I.

The Notion of Happineſs ſtated; Granted imperfect, compared to that of another Life, yet in it ſelf conſiderable and deſirable.

HAving removed ſuch Diſcouragements as were leſs conſiderable, I come now to examine that which attacks my Deſign with the rudeſt Violence, and undermines the very Foundation of it; I mean, the *Impoſſibility* of obtaining Happineſs in this World. 'Tis true, if our Endeavours after Happineſs here, could ſucceed no further than to ſecure it to us hereafter, none could deny them reaſonable upon this ſole Account: Yet becauſe this Perſwaſion would blunt the Force of one of the moſt powerful Motives to Religion, which is, *That its Ways are Ways of Pleaſantneſs, and all its Paths Peace*, and conſequently very much abate our Vigilance and Induſtry in purſuit of it; I judg it indiſpenſibly neceſſary to enter into

a full Diſcuſſion of this Point. In managing which I will, *Firſt*, Aſſert the Poſſibility of obtaining Happineſs, by plain, and as I think, unanſwerable Arguments: And then, *Secondly*, I will endeavour to give full Satisfaction to all Objections to the contrary. But, before I do either of theſe, as well for Order and Inſtruction-ſake, as to obviate Miſtakes, I think 'tis fit I ſhould explain my Notion of the Happineſs I propoſe; I muſt therefore acquaint my Reader, that I do not promiſe him a Heaven upon Earth, that I do not promiſe him the Happineſs of Angels, but of Men; and that I do not underſtand Happineſs in this Propoſition of that which is every way perfect and abſolute, to which Fancy it ſelf can add nothing, but of that which is like our Nature, incompleat and imperfect, ſpeaking comparatively, and yet truly great and excellent in it ſelf too. *Seneca* doth ſomewhere deſcribe his happy Man much after this manner; "He is one "who deſpiſes all thoſe things which are "ſubject to change, who accounts nothing "Good or Bad but Vertue or Vice; who "is not puffed up by proſperous Events, nor "caſt down by adverſe Ones; one whoſe "great Pleaſure is to deſpiſe Pleaſure, one "above either Deſire or Fear, content with "the Riches which are the true and proper Poſſeſ-

The Happineſs of this Life granted Imperfect.

" Poſſeſſion of Vertue, and covering nothing
" more; ſuch a one, he thinks, cannot chuſe
" but be happy. And I think ſo too, and I fear a great deal happier than any Man on Earth can ever be: This is a gay Dream, but well ſuting that Philoſophy, which requires the Tranquillity and Steadineſs or Conſtancy of God to be joined with the Frailty of Man; a Compoſition of things infinitely more incompatible than that of an Immortal Soul and Mortal Body can be fancy'd to be. For my part I am content to call a Building Beautiful, tho there be ſomething in it which doth not anſwer the Teſt of the ſtricteſt Art, or at leaſt of the moſt accurate Fancy; I am content to call it Day, tho flitting Clouds and Showers do now and then a little obſcure the Light; ſo can I not chuſe but call him Righteous, who is ſincere tho not perfect, whoſe Life is generally ſpeaking bright and exemplary, tho not utterly void of Spots and Blemiſhes, whoſe Motion is a Progreſs towards Vertue, tho it be ſometimes retarded, nay ſometimes interrupted: and ſo am I content to think him a happy Man, not who is utterly exempt from all Diſturbances in Mind or Body; not who lives in conſtant Extaſy, but him whoſe Pleaſures are more and greater than his Troubles, whoſe Hopes are more and greater

ter than his Fears; one whose Enjoyments, tho they do not transport, do satisfy him; one whose Serenity and Calm of Mind, tho it may suffer Interruptions, suffers but few and slight ones. I will intreat the Reader to admit of this Notion of Happiness here, till we gradually advance to a clear and full discovery of it. Now as we are not to lay aside any Advice of being vertuous, because we cannot arrive at the height and constancy of Holy Angels; so neither are we to cast off all thoughts of Happiness, because we cannot equal theirs: For if we are happy in such a degree as the Imperfection of our Nature, and this inferiour State will permit; if we can free our selves from those Miseries which do involve the foolish and vicious part of Mankind, if we can possess our selves of those humble and modest Joys that humane Nature is here capable of, it will be worth all the time and travail we can spend upon the Design: And that we may advance thus far, the following Considerations will, I think, render it more than probable.

The Possibility, &c. proved.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Possibility of attaining Happiness, Asserted.

1. Some happier than others, and this owing to their Vertue. 2. Good and Evil in the World. Obj. Evils more than Goods, answered, by asserting the contrary. From the Suffrage of the Good. The Make of the World. The Nature of Man. Scripture. The Confession of Atheists and Epicureans. Obj. 2. Evil more efficacious than Good, Answered. What Impressions Evils ought to make on Man, Examined. Natural Evils slight, unless sharpened by our selves. Moral Evils avoidable. What Impressions Evils actually have, Examined. Man proved naturally furnished with Inclinations and Arts that magnify Good, and lessen Evil. Obj. 3. Good and Evil not dependant of Man, answered, by considering the Nature of Wisdom and Folly. A Recapitulation of the Arguments of this Chapter.

Because some are happier than others.

FIrst, It cannot be deny'd but that some Men are more happy, or at least less miserable than others: Who will deny *Titus* to have been infinitely more happy than *Nero*?

Nero? *Titus*, whose Government of the *Roman* People was not more mild and gentle than the impartial Reflections of his Conscience upon himself and Actions, if we credit *Suetonius* in his Relation of his Death? *Nero*, that guilty Wretch, whose Conscience was no less a Plague to him than he to *Rome*? Who prefers not the Character of *Mitio* in the Comedian, before that of *Demea*? *Mitio*, whose smooth and kind as well as prudent Behaviour, rendred him easy and amiable to his Family and Relations, and made the Fortune of his whole Life flow calmly and gently to the End? *Demea*, whose sour, suspicious and severe Behaviour did exasperate and ruffle the Minds of all that related to him, and did disturb and muddy that Stream of his Affairs, which would otherwise have run smooth and clear? Who will compare the pleasant Retirements, the modest Contentments, the regular and vertuous Enjoyments of *Atticus*, with the turbulent Popularity of *Gracchus*, or the fatal Luxuries of *Catiline*, or the proud Cruelties of *Sylla* and *Marius*? What then? Shall we attribute no share of Happiness or Misery to the Vertues or the Vices of the one or other? or no part of their Vertues or Vices to themselves, but to (I know not what) fatal and irresistible Causes? If we assert

Sueton. *in vita* Titi.

Terent.

assert the former, with frontless Confidence we contradict unquestionable Matters of Fact; if the latter, we rob the Vertuous of that Merit which rendred 'em beloved in their Lives, and ever since has preserv'd their Memories Sacred and Honourable; and we acquit those from all Blame or Guilt, which the Laws of their own Country, and the common Sense of Mankind have ever condemned and detested. What gross and monstrous Absurdities are these? Shall we now, after the Improvement of so many Ages, (for we pretend to grow more Wise and Learned daily) dispute whether Vice or Vertue be the better Guide of humane Actions, or the more serviceable to humane Life? Shall Sloth and Luxury be thought to conduce as much to the Prosperity and Decency of our Lives, as Industry and frugal Temperance? Shall Ambition, Pride, and Choler be now judg'd as instrumental to promote or preserve the Peace and Repose of our Minds and States, as Modesty, Meekness, and Charity? Or if this be too daring a Defiance to Sense and Experience, shall we contend that the Slothful and Luxurious, the Unjust and Cruel, are as blameless and innocent; nay, if we will extend Principles to their just Consequence, as commendable and worthy of Praise as the Industrious and

Temperate, the Meek and Gentle, the Juſt and Charitable? For this muſt inevitably follow, if neither Mens Vertues nor Vices be in any degree to be aſcribed to themſelves. Wretched and deſperate is that Shift that equals the Juſt and Unjuſt, the Induſtrious and Sluggard, the great Mind that ſtands upright under and outbraves Misfortune, and the degenerous One which effeminately ſhrinks and breaks under it! Wretched the Shift that equals the Tyrant and moſt gracious Prince, the loyalleſt Subject and the Traitor, the faithful Friend and the perfidious Flatterer; and all this we muſt be driven to, or elſe, as we cannot deny that ſome are happier than others, ſo we muſt not deny that the Happineſs of the one, or Miſery of the other, is owing in ſome meaſure at leaſt to their Vertues and Vices, and theſe to themſelves. And if this be true, 'tis evident, we may be happy if we will; and tho we may not equal the moſt Happy, (for I will not exclude Temper, Education, Fortune, from all ſhare in Mens Miſery or Happineſs) yet ſince every degree of Happineſs is truly valuable, let us with all our Might endeavour to be as happy as we can.

Hor. *Nec quia deſperes invicti membra Glyconis,*
Nodoſa Corpus noli prohibere Chiragra:
Eſt quiddam prodire tenus—— The

The mighty *Glyco*'s Strength you can't attain,
Don't therefore ſcorn to free your Limbs from Pain
Of knotty Gout: Eaſe, tho not Strength, to gain,
Is no ſmall Happineſs——

But to purſue our Proof;

2. It is a great Abſurdity to confound or equal Vertue and Vice, but 'tis not the greateſt they commit who deny the poſſibility of attaining Happineſs; for he that baniſhes Happineſs out of the World, does at the ſame time baniſh Good and Evil out of it too: for Good being nothing elſe but the Subſerviency of ſome things to our true Intereſt and Pleaſure, and Evil the Tendency of others to our trouble and injury; it muſt needs follow, if there be Good and Evil in the World, that he who has a greater ſhare of Good than Evil, is a happy Man; and he that denieth Good and Evil, may with as plauſible a Confidence deny all humane Paſſions, and aſſert that there is neither Love nor Hatred, neither Joy, nor Grief, nor Hope, nor Fear, nor Pity, nor Envy; for Good or Evil are the Objects or Cauſes of

Becauſe there is Good and Evil in the World.

all these. I may then, I think, take it for granted, that no Man will take the Confidence to say, that there is no such thing as Good or Evil in the World; and consequently all Men must be oblig'd to acknowledg such a State as Happiness in the World too, unless they will affirm one of these three things; either, First, That Evil grows up every where in thick Crops; Good, thin, scatter'd, and rarely to be found, especially grown up to its Maturity: That consequently there are none whose share of Evil doth not infinitely outweigh that of Good. Or, Secondly, That Evil hath so much of Venom and Malignity in it, that a little Evil contributes more to our Misery than a great deal of Good can to our Happiness; so ripe and full-grown is Evil, so lank, undergrown, and every way imperfect is Good in this World. Or, Thirdly, That we our selves can contribute nothing to that Good or Evil which is our Portion: 'tis the Product, not of Reason or Industry, but of Time and Chance, or of some other Principle which is not in our Power. All these deserve to be weigh'd, not only becaufe the Examination of them will tend to chear and encourage the Minds of Men, and to render the great Creator and Governour of the World more dear and venerable to us; but

also,

also, because it will be of some use and service to the whole Inquiry.

First, Therefore let us examine what Truth there is in that Fancy which supposes the Weight and Number of Evils in the World infinitely to exceed that of good things. I know there are a sort of sour and murmuring, of proud and ambitious Wretches, who deal with their God as with their Prince or Patrons; and estimate Favours and Benefits, not according to their Merit, but Expectation, greedy and haughty Expectation which even prodigal Bounty cannot satisfy: 'tis the strange Temper of some Men that they wither and grow lean with Discontent and Envy; even whilst their studied Meals distract the wanton Appetite, and their very Attendants are sleek and full, and fat with the remains of their Feasts; and the meanest of their Relations thrive into Pride and Insolence by the mere sprinklings of their Plenty. I know 'tis natural to some to blaspheme God and the King, to quarrel with and reproach Providence, and the Government; while loaded with good things, they stretch themselves on silken Couches, under Roofs of Cedar, and loll at ease in their gilt Coaches; and yet at the same time the honest Country-

1. *Evils not more than Goods in the World. From the Suffrage of the Good.*

man, who with Security, tho much Drudgery, ploughs, and ſows, and reaps a few Acres, eats his plain Meals with Cheerfulneſs, ſleeps without Diſturbance, bleſſes God, and magnifies the Goodneſs of his Prince. The Contentment of the one is an evident Proof of God's Bounty and Goodneſs; whoſe Proviſion doth far exceed the Neceſſities of his Creatures: The Diſcontent of th' other can be no Diſparagement to it, ſince he has dealt extremely liberally with 'em, tho they enjoy not what they poſſeſs. We are not therefore to judg of the World by the Clamours and Invectives of ſuch as are always mutinous and diſſatisfy'd, but by the Suffrages of thoſe humble, modeſt, and grateful Souls who know how to value the Favours of Heaven and themſelves as they ought to do; who do not mar and corrupt every Bleſſing by Peeviſhneſs, or Envy, or Pride, or Wantonneſs, but can weigh their Enjoyments, their Hopes and their Merits in juſt and equal Ballances; and diſcerning how much the one does exceed the other, chearfully adore and praiſe the World's Author and Governour. If this Controverſy were to be determin'd by ſuch, we ſhould find theſe even under uneaſy and Tyrannical Governments, and in the more barren and niggardly Countries, confuting this Objecti-

on

on by their Chearfulneſs and Contentment: what would they have done, if Providence had planted 'em there where a fertile Soil and thriving Trade had unladed the Wealth and Plenty of the World into their Arms, and a mild and gentle Government had ſecur'd and guarded their Enjoyments?

From the Make of the World.

But let us decide the Controverſy not by Votes but Reaſons, let us conſider the State and Nature of the World; Is there one in a thouſand who is left utterly unfurniſh'd of all Means of wiſe and wholeſom Inſtruction, which is the Good of the Soul of Man? or is there one in a thouſand maim'd and defective in the Powers and Faculties of the Soul, or Senſes and Members of the Body? Is there one in a thouſand born under ſo unlucky and envious Planets, that he cannot by any Induſtry or Vertue provide himſelf a comfortable Subſiſtence? View and ſurvey the World; examin and conſider Man, and then tell me whether there be any room for thoſe Reproaches and ſpiteful Reflections, by which ſome Men have ſo outrag'd Nature and Providence? *Philo Judæus* tells us a Rabbinical Story to this purpoſe, That when God had created the World, he demanded of a Prophet, Whether he ſaw any thing wanting to conſummate and compleat the glorious Work? Who told him, *Nothing*

Philo Jud. de Plantatione Noe.

thing but an Intelligent Being to praiſe the wiſe and gracious Architect. God approving the Advice, created Man. The *Hebrew* Philoſophers (it ſeems) thought the World exactly perfect, ſuch a Work as might beſpeak God the Author of it: and no wonder, for they were inſpired by *Moſes*, who brings in God reflecting upon his own Creation, thus; *And God ſaw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.* How unlike is all this to the *Epicurean* Philoſophy, whoſe great Patron *Lucretius* endeavours to infer from the ill Contrivance, the manifold Defects, the innumerable Evils of the World, that God could not be the Creator of it! That ever that Work by which God deſign'd to exalt his Glory, ſhould be drawn into an occaſion of diſhonouring and reproaching him! That ever that Work which deſerv'd the Praiſes of Men and Angels, ſhould at laſt ſtand in need of Apologies and Defences! If we look up to the Heavens, ſuch is the Beauty of thoſe Bodies, ſo uniform and regular their Motions, ſo exactly are they diſpos'd both for Ornament and Service, that the Speculation naturally exalts the Mind, and inſenſibly raiſes it above the Body: nay, it has tempted ſome to think every Star moved and acted by ſome underſtanding Spirit. If we look upon

upon the Earth, ſo wonderful is the Variety, ſo inconceivable the Wealth and Plenty of it, that it is not only ſufficient for the Needs and Deſires of the Sober and Temperate, but even for the Luxury and Wantonneſs of the Fanciful and Intemperate: every Place almoſt is a Paradiſe, there is no Country almoſt which cannot afford us *Tempe*, or *Campania*, *Opus gaudentis Naturæ*, a Work which Nature ſeems to have created when in the gayeſt and the kindeſt Humour. If there were room for Fancy in ſacred things, one would almoſt think that *Moſes* out of Ignorance of other Countries, or Love of his own, had confin'd *Eden* within thoſe narrow Bounds he ſets it; and that it had only been loſt there, becauſe a fuller Diſcovery of the World had now found it almoſt every where: This is the World we complain of.

From the Nature of Man.

Let us now conſider Man, and we ſhall find with the Pſalmiſt, *that he is wonderfully made; he is but a little lower than the Angels;* Pſal. 139. *he is crown'd with Glory and Honour, and all the Creatures are put under his Feet, all the* Pſal. 8. *Fowls of the Air, and all the Beaſts of the Field.* How infinitely wiſe as well as kind does God appear in his Contrivance? So modeſt are his Appetites, that a ſmall Portion of Nature's Good is a full Meal or Feaſt;

Feaſt; and yet ſo various, that there is nothing in all the Proviſion, in all the Joys and Luxuries of Nature, which he is not capable of taſting and enjoying. If we regard the Mind of Man, 'tis capable of a moſt ſurprizing Satisfaction in the Contemplation of the hidden Powers, the ſecret Laws and Operations of Nature; nay, it riſes higher, it paſſes the Bounds of Mechanick Nature, it entertains it ſelf with moral Perfections, and the ſpiritual Excellencies of an inviſible World, and gazes on thoſe Charms and Glories which are not ſubject to the bodily Eye: *Vultus nimis lubricos aſpici:* Such is the Nature of the Soul, that when it pleaſes it can retire within it ſelf, withdraw from Senſe, and be ſecure and happy in its own Strength and Wealth, *Ipſa ſuis pollens opibus:* and when it pleaſes it can walk forth like *Dinah* to ſee the Daughters of the Land, thoſe Beauties that Senſe preſents it with; and that too (if guarded by awful Vertue) without the danger of a Rape. To ſay all of it in a word, 'tis capable of a ſhare in all the Good, and not neceſſarily ſubject to any of the Evil of this World.

——————*Fatis avolſa voluntas.*

There are no Fates that can controul
The ſovereign Freedom of the Soul.

If

If this be a true Account of Man, and the State of the World which he inhabits; if the one be fill'd with all things neceſſary and delightful, and the other be endow'd with all thoſe Capacities and Appetites that fit him to enjoy 'em; nay, if his Soul can raiſe it ſelf above the Pleaſures, and exempt it ſelf from the Changes and Revolutions of it: nothing is more manifeſt, than that the Evil in Life cannot be greater than the Good, unleſs it be owing to our ſelves.

From Scripture.

And to leave this Matter beyond diſpute, no Man pretending to receive Revelation, ſhould admit of the contrary Opinion; for no Texts of Divine Writ are more plain than thoſe which proclaim to us God's Love of Mankind; *That he doth not afflict or grieve willingly the Children of Men*: that the Book of Creation and Providence is writ all over with the legible Characters of Love; ſo legible, that it renders the Idolatry and Wickedneſs of the Gentiles inexcuſable: And finally, that *he gives us richly all things to enjoy*; where the Apoſtle excellently expreſſes at once the Bounty and Deſign of God: His Bounty, in that he gives us all things *richly*; his Deſign, not to enkindle, and then delude our Deſires, like the Tree of Life or Knowledg, made only to be forbidden us, but on purpoſe to be enjoy'd by us.

1 Tim. 6.

us. So then the Christian cannot believe the Evils to outweigh the Goods of Life, without contradicting Revelation; nor the Atheist or Epicurean, as shall appear from what follows, without contradicting himself.

From the Confession of Atheists and Epicureans.

If Nature has contriv'd the World so ill, if it has scatter'd good things with such a sparing and envious Hand, whence are all those Transports and Extasies we meet with amongst these Men? What is the Ground? what is the Matter of them? whence so rich a Crop of worldly sensual Pleasures? whence so much Dotage on, and Fondness for the World we so complain of? whence are the Charms and irresistible Temptations which the Generality of Mankind is vanquish'd by? whence is it that Men are so willing to set up their Rest on this side *Canaan*? whence that Dread and Aversion of Death, as the most formidable Evil?

Again, If Nature has been such a Stepmother to Man, if it has frowardly and peevishly design'd him little else but Mischief: whence that Sagacity and Penetration of Mind, searching with Delight into all the Retirements of Nature? whence that comprehensive and almost immense Capacity of Pleasure? whence that Strength and Greatness of Soul, enabling not only to confront;

front, but to despise Evils, and to be happy in despite of 'em? These are Advantages so incomparably great and good, that no Evils can be ballanced against 'em: and 'tis evident that no Writings, no not of the Stoicks themselves, were ever more stuffed with boasting and daring Accounts of the Nature of Man, than those of the Epicureans. And thus, from all put together, whether we consult the Nature and State of the World and Man, the Testimony of Revelation or Reason, the Suffrages of the good-humour'd and grateful Part of Mankind, or the Confessions of the Voluptuous and Atheistical, 'tis evident that Good does out-weigh Evil in the Design of God or Nature. But have I not my self, in the beginning of this Treatise, acknowledg'd the Weight and Number of *Evils* great? Yes, but *Evils* not of God's Creation, but our own: for the Truth of the whole is, ταράσσει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, οὐ τὰ πράγματα, ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων δόγματα. Not things themselves, but the Shades and Fantasms, wanton, superstitious, effeminate or froward Minds do raise about 'em, disturb the Quiet and Repose of Man. So then, if we our selves do not multiply the Number of our Evils, our share of Good in Life may be much greater than our share of Evil; and if we be not

acces-

acceſſary to our own Miſery, we may be happy. Unleſs,

2. The Efficacy of Evil not greater than that of Good. Natural Evils contemptible to the Vertuous. Moral ones avoidable.

Secondly, Evil hath ſo much of Venom and Malignity in it, that a little Evil contributes more to our Miſery than a great deal of Good can to our Happineſs. We may judg of the Force and Energy of Good and Evil, either by that Influence they generally *have*, or that they *ought* to *have* upon the State of Mankind. If we conſider what Impreſſions they *ought* to make upon Men, the Queſtion will come to a ſpeedy and a happy Iſſue; for then we muſt either reckon nothing an Evil but a Moral one, that is, Sin and Vice; or at leaſt we muſt acknowledg that the Venom and Malignity of other Evils is not comparable to that of Moral ones. This latter Opinion is an unqueſtionable Truth: for who will not make a wide Difference between a Misfortune and a Crime, between an Affliction and a Puniſhment, between thoſe Inconveniencies, Trouble, and Pain, which we ſuffer as guilty Criminals, and thoſe we ſuffer as unfortunate Innocents, or afflicted Heroes or Saints? For notwithſtanding the Evils or Pains ſhould be in the matter of 'em the ſame, yet there is a vaſt difference in the ſuffering; the one makes Man much more miſerable than

than the other; for our Misfortunes only reach the Body, not the Mind: But when we ſuffer for our Crimes, the whole Man ſuffers, the Soul as well as Body: Misfortunes, when the Storm is o're-paſs'd, leave no deform'd Ruins, no Wounds nor Scars behind 'em; but our Crimes leave Stains and Guilt behind, which haunt the Mind with perpetual Horror. From this diſtinction of the Nature and Effect of Evils, we may infer this comfortable Concluſion, That nothing can make Man *wholly, truly* miſerable, but himſelf; Nothing can oppreſs him by the Weight of moral Evils, but his own Choice, for nothing can compel or neceſſitate him to be wicked; the Stroaks, the Wounds of Natural Evils (ſo I will call all the reſt diſtinct from Moral, and owing their Being to the Revolutions of Time, and Chance, and Nature) are faint and ſlight; the Mind of Man ought not to ſuffer it ſelf to be too deeply and ſenſibly affected by them. It is the Work of Reaſon and Religion to fortify the Mind againſt the Impreſſions of theſe Evils: and truly that Mind that is furniſh'd with true Notions of things, with a rational and ſolid Faith, with ſteady and well-grounded Hopes, may bear the impetuous ſhock of all theſe Waves and Storms calm and unmov'd: nay, I may

boldly affirm, not only that Vertue checks and controuls theſe Evils, blunts their Edg, and abates their Force; but, what is more, that their natural Strength, their own proper Force is weak and contemptible, unleſs our own Vices be combin'd and confederated with 'em againſt us. Our Pride muſt aid our Enemy to render his Affront provoking; our Covetouſneſs and Ambition muſt aſſiſt Fortune to render its Contempt or Hatred of us deſtructive to the Tranquillity of our State. Falſhood under a diſguiſe of Friendſhip could never have abus'd our Confidence, by betraying our Infirmities, or forſaking us in Affliction, had not our own Folly and Self-conceit firſt betray'd us, expoſing us a naked Prey to Flattery and Treachery. The Coldneſs or Neglect of Great Men could never wound us; the hollow deceitful Profeſſions of thoſe above us, could never fool or fret us, did not the Fondneſs of our own Deſires betray us firſt into vain Preſumption, and a flattering Credulity. The Storm that ſnatcheth away a Relation or a Friend, could never overthrow me, if I ſtood upon my own bottom, if I were not guilty of one of the greateſt Weakneſſes, of placing my Happineſs in any thing out of my own Power, and ſo making my ſelf dependent upon another Man's Fancy or Fortune.

tune. Finally, Death it ſelf muſt derive its Terrors from the mournful Solemnities we dreſs it in, from the Darkneſs and Horrors of our deluded Imaginations; or elſe it would prove but a contemptible Bugbear, a very inconſiderable Evil, or *none at all*. Thus 'tis evident, That if we diſtinguiſh Evils into Natural and Moral, we ſhall have little reaſon to think the Influence of Evil ſo malignant and deadly, ſince 'tis in our own power to avoid Moral Evils; and Natural ones ſtrike but half way, they wound not the Soul that is arm'd and guarded with Reaſon and Religion.

But now, if with the Stoicks we ſhould admit of no other ſort of Evil but what is Moral, if we ſhould allow the name of Good to nothing but Vertue, or of Evil to nothing but Vice, then we muſt look upon temporal and external Misfortunes as Inconveniences and Diſadvantages only; they may make us leſs happy, but they cannot make us miſerable. And truly, if we ſhould here ſuppoſe or take for granted, that there were another Life, or that the Pleaſure of Vertue triumphing over Calamities and Afflictions, were conſiderably great; this Opinion cannot imply ſo great an Abſurdity as ſome would faſten upon it, or be a mere λογομαχία, or idle Contention of Words, ſince I can-

not tell with what consonancy to Truth, or propriety of Speech, we can call those Troubles or Hardships Evils, which directly tend to procure for us an infinite Good, or a Pleasure which doth abundantly out-weigh our Sufferings.

What Impressions Evils do in fact make upon Men.

I think 'tis now sufficiently evident that natural Evils are not of that mighty Efficacy and deadly venomous Quality, that it should be thought that a little Evil doth more effectually contribute to our Misery, than a great deal of Good can to our Happiness: 'tis apparent how slight the Impressions are which they *ought* to make upon us. It will now be time to consider what Impressions they do generally make upon us, what their real Effect commonly is, how Men generally are mov'd and affected by them. 'Tis true there are some that mix Heaven and Earth upon every slight occasion, that will receive Good but no Evil at the Hand of God, most insensible of Blessing, but extreamly tender and sensible of any Evil: but this speaks not the Nature of Evil, but of the Man; it speaks him ingrateful, but not the Evil intolerable. Nor is Human Nature to be measured by this whining querulous Humour of a few, but by the Sense and Temper of the generality; amongst whom 'tis easy to observe, how Instinct teaches

teaches us to elude the ſtroke and force of Evil: Nature opens its Arms, and enlarges it ſelf to receive Good, and all the Powers of the Mind greedily ſtrive to ſhare in it; but it contracts and ſhrinks, retires and ſtands upon its defence at the approach of Evil: 'tis apt to flatter it ſelf, and apt to hope, apt to leſſen Evil, and magnify Good, apt to put off the thoughts of approaching Trouble, and to anticipate its Pleaſures; 'tis full of great Deſigns and gaudy Projects, and eaſily prone to delight and content it ſelf with thin, airy, and imaginary Schemes of Good: this and much more is evident in a thouſand daily Inſtances of Human Life, by which 'tis plain, Nature in the contrivance of Man kindly deſign'd to fit and diſpoſe him for Happineſs, by giving him ſuch Inclinations as might ſerve to leſſen the Evil, to increaſe the Good, to ſupply the Defects of this mortal and imperfect State. Is it not manifeſt, that whereas Evil looks leſs to us, Good looks bigger at a diſtance? We are willing to help Fortune, and call in the Aids of Fancy to adorn and enrich her Gifts. Nor is it eaſy to defeat Man of this Humour, he dreams of a bottomleſs Abyſs in every Good, in every Pleaſure; and notwithſtanding the daily Confutations of Experience, he ſtill deſires to repeat his Enjoyments o're again,

as if he did ſtill hope to find ſome new untaſted Sweet, ſome Pleaſure undiſcover'd, untry'd before. How apt are we to flatter our ſelves, and willing to be flatter'd! every Man repreſents himſelf and State under the faireſt Idea that he can poſſibly frame of it, and turns away his Eye and Thought from every thing that may offend him: Beauty, Strength, Health, Underſtanding, Wiſdom, Reputation, Attendants, Power, Wealth, and whatever future Good he can form tho but a ſlender Pretenſion to, make up the gay Idea; nay, and even long Life and undiſturb'd Security, are there drawn as two Pillars to ſupport the Building, the daring but kind Confidence of Man, that makes himſelf the Maſter of Fate and Fortune! If you ſhould mark this Tablet with ever ſo prying and curious an Eye, you would not be able to diſcover either Deformity or Folly, or Diſhonour, or Poverty, or Diſeaſe, or Death: for theſe, Man, kind to himſelf, baniſhes far from his Thoughts, and ſuffers not to enter into the Portraicture of himſelf. And hence 'tis that moſt Men never diſturb Life with the apprehenſion of its End, and never feel Death till they are dying; kind Inſtinct ſhewing us an eaſier way to leſſen this Evil, than the Reaſon of moſt Philoſophers ever could, making our ſuffering extreamly

treamly ſhort; and even then too almoſt in the midſt of Death, Men fondly dream of, and hope for Life, and can ſcarcely ſuffer their Hope to expire in the laſt Gaſp: Nay, ſo willing to be deluded, ſo eaſy to be impos'd upon are Men, that they make even thoſe things which are the Trophies of Death, and the Monuments of Man's Frailty and Vanity, miniſter to them ſome ſlight Comforts at leaſt againſt Mortality; they divert and entertain themſelves with the Mourning and Pomp of their Obſequies, with Blacks and Tombs, with the dying Echo's of ſurviving Reputation, and with the Grandure and Felicity of their Poſterity; as if they did fondly perſwade themſelves that they ſhould be concern'd in all theſe things, that ſomething beyond the Grave did relate to them, and that they did not utterly periſh and die. And if this kind as well as obſtinate Hope do in ſome meaſure break the force of the greateſt Evil, that is Death, we cannot but expect that it ſhould be highly ſerviceable to Man in moving him to deſpiſe, or enabling him to vanquiſh leſs Evils: hence 'tis that no Examples of the Inconſtancy or Change of Fortune, of the Incertainty of Royal or Popular Favour, no Inſtances of ſlighted Service, deluded Hope, ſudden Death, or any thing of this kind are

ſufficient to diſcourage the Attempts, the Purſuits of Mankind after Worldly Things; we boldly adventure upon thoſe Seas which we ſee ſcatter'd over with numerous Wrecks, and confidently purſue thoſe Paths, where we every moment meet with the ominous Ruines of diſappointed Hope, and fruitleſs Drudgery, and baffled Preſumption. Thus it is, I determin'd not that thus it ought to be, I examin'd not what is here the Office of Philoſophy, or the Work of Vertue; I have barely repreſented the Humour and Inclination of Man, only that you may ſee that he is not ſuch a defenceleſs, ſhiftleſs Creature, but that his Reaſon dares confront, and can vanquiſh Evils in open Battel, and by downright Force, and his Inſtinct elude 'em by various, and thoſe (if well conducted) uſeful and innocent Arts. It doth therefore manifeſtly appear, that as the number of Evils is not greater than that of Goods, ſo neither is the Vigour and Energy of the one ſo much greater than that of the other, that a little Evil ſhould outweigh a great deal of Good, that a little Evil ſhould contribute more to a Man's Miſery than a great deal of Good to his Happineſs. There remains nothing further to be examin'd, but

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That Fancy which aſcribes Man's Portion of Good and Evil to Time or Chance, &c. not Man's Vertue or Induſtry, to any thing but to himſelf: and he that can with Confidence affirm this, may with as good Grace aſſert, that there is neither Wiſdom nor Folly in the World; for if there be, this Imagination muſt ſoon vaniſh, ſince Wiſdom is nothing elſe but the choice of true Good, and rejection of Evil, the purſuit of our true Happineſs, by all the moſt rational and probable means, and a declining and flying from all thoſe things that are repugnant to it. And tho Succeſs and good Fortune do not always attend Wiſdom and Vertue, yet you ſhall never perſwade any but mad Men or Fools, that 'tis in vain to be Vertuous, or irrational to be Wiſe. *Solomon* has indeed obſerv'd as an Inſtance or Proof of the Vanity of all things, *That the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battel to the Strong, neither yet Bread to the Wiſe, nor yet Riches to Men of Underſtanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill*: I exempt not the Wiſe from ſubjection to Time and Chance, which is all that *Solomon* complains of here; but notwithſtanding I muſt ever think with him, that *Wiſdom excels Folly, as much as Light doth Darkneſs*; not only becauſe chearful, delightful to it ſelf, but alſo becauſe 'tis the happieſt

3. *Man's Good or Evil depends upon himſelf, from the nature of Wiſdom and Folly.*

Eccleſ. 9.

Eccleſ. 2.

pieſt Guide of Human Life, bleſt generally with Succeſs, as well as rich in intrinſick Good, and in ſome meaſure ſelf-ſufficient: nor does our Engliſh Proverb, *Fools have the fortune*, imply any more than that the Proſperity of Fools is to be imputed to their Fortune, that of wiſe Men to their Merit; that Succeſs does commonly wait upon Vertue and Wiſdom, and nothing but an extraordinary Chance can turn it upon the Fool or Sinner; tho all this while I underſtand Succeſs in things neceſſary, not ſuperfluous: for I cannot ſee how it can be any Diſparagement to Providence to turn that Plenty another way, which would not like ſoft diſtilling Rains and Dew, cheriſh, refreſh and increaſe the tender Plants, Wiſdom and Vertue, but like a Flood waſh away the Earth from their Roots, and either utterly extirpate 'em, or leave 'em oppreſs'd and buried in Rubbiſh. If this were not true, if the Experience as well as Reaſon of Mankind did not confirm it, Men would not ſerve Apprentiſhips to Trades, Men would not ſtudy Arts or Sciences, Men would not ſtrive with toil and hazard to make their Point, but lazily and ſecurely ſtay till Fortune rain its Golden Showers into their Laps.

By a Recapitulation of all that has been hitherto diſcours'd, it may eaſily appear how far

far I have advanc'd in the proof of that Aſſertion I undertook to make good, namely, that Happineſs may be attain'd in this World. I have ſhew'd, that ſome are happier than others, or at leaſt leſs miſerable, and that this difference of Condition or State is to be imputed to the Vertues of ſome, and the Vices of others. I have prov'd that the World abounds with good things, that there is no Appetite nor Capacity of Man, that may not find Objects proper and agreeable, and ſuch as in a great meaſure may delight and ſatisfy; and that Man is endow'd with ſuch a variety of Faculties and Senſes, that there is ſcarce any thing in all the variety of Beings the World contains, which he is not capable of enjoying. From whence it clearly follows, that Man may be happy in the Enjoyment of theſe good things, unleſs the Evil of Life ſowre and imbitter the Good, or the attainment of the Good be out of the power of Man. To remove all ſuſpicion of both which I diſcours'd ſomething, tho briefly, of the Nature of Evil, and the Nature of Man, evincing plainly the Impotence and Feebleneſs of the one, and the Strength and Preparations of the other; and for the Cloſe of all, I have endeavour'd to make it manifeſt, that Good and Evil are not ſo much the reſult

of

of Time or Chance, *&c.* as the neceſſary conſequence of Wiſdom and Folly. From all which the Concluſion that naturally ariſes is this; That if Man be miſerable, 'tis his own fault, or, which is all one, a Man may be happy if he will, which was the thing to be proved.

A Recapitulatory Concluſion. Let us try now by a cloſe Application of all that has been ſaid to the Wants and Neceſſities of Mankind, what the Evidence, what the Conviction, what the real uſe and force of this Diſcourſe is. I am unhappy, I am miſerable; whoe're thou art that ſay'ſt ſo, thou muſt needs mean one of theſe two things. Thou do'ſt enjoy no Good, or art oppreſt with Evil: If the latter, I demand what Evil? ſpeak out, ſpeak plainly. There are three ſorts of Evils, the Evils of the Mind, the Evils of the Body, the Evils of Fortune. Which of theſe art thou oppreſt by? The Evils of the Mind? theſe are either ſinful Paſſions, or what is the Effect of them, guilty Fears: nothing can compel thee to be wicked; ceaſe to be wicked, and thou wilt ceaſe to fear. The Evils of the Body? they are generally the Effect of unruly Paſſions and a diſorderly Life; and where they are not, the Pleaſures of the Mind will out-weigh the Pains of the Body. The Evils of Fortune? 'tis in thy Power whether

whether theſe ſhall be really Evils, or no; they befal thy Poſſeſſions, not thee: the fooliſh and vicious Mind only ſuffers in theſe, the wiſe and vertuous one is much above them; 'tis therefore thy own fault if thou be oppreſt with Evil. But wilt thou ſay the former? I enjoy no Good, no ſatisfactory Good. Why, is there no Good to be enjoy'd? I have already prov'd the contrary; and if I had not, how eaſy were it here to do it? there's Truth to entertain thy Underſtanding, Moral Perfections to delight thy Will, variety of Objects to treat thy Senſes, the Excellencies of the viſible and inviſible World to be enjoy'd by thee: Why then doſt thou defer to live? why doſt thou not begin to enjoy? Here 'tis evident that thou muſt be forc'd to ſay one of theſe two things, either that thou art not capable of enjoying theſe Bleſſings, or that they are out of thy reach, out of thy power: to ſay thou art not capable of 'em is to renounce the Faculties of thy Soul, and the Senſes of thy Body: to ſay they are out of thy reach, is in effect to ſay that Vertue and Vice, Wiſdom and Folly are all one; or, which is every jot as abſurd, that thou art wicked and ſottiſh, and canſt not help it. And this is that indeed which in effect all do ſay that accuſe Fortune, or Fate, or Nature, or any thing but them-

themſelves as the Cauſes of their Miſery: and yet as abſurd as this is, it muſt be now examined, becauſe the Minds of Men are perverted and diſcouraged by ſuch Notions. I will therefore now proceed to the next thing, that is, to anſwer the Objections againſt the Attainment of Happineſs.

CHAP. III.

God not the Cauſe of Man's Miſery.

Object. 1. *Imputing to God Man's Miſery,* anſwered; *and God's Goodneſs and Holineſs* aſſerted. *The Tranſition to the Objections. The Importance of right Notions of God. Polytheiſm, Superſtition, and Atheiſm. The Iſſue of wrong ones.* Sect. I. *Of the Goodneſs of God.* 1. *God proved infinitely Good. The Abſurdity of the contrary. God the Original of all Perfections. The Teſtimony of Pagans and Scripture.* Obj. 1. *From God's Dealings with the Pagans,* anſwered. Obj. 2. *Other Diſpenſations* vindicated. 2. *Of the Influence of God's Goodneſs on Man. Whether God's Goodneſs extend to Man, concerns not the main Objection. That it does, is proved, From*

From whence inferred, 1. *That God is not the Cauſe of Man's Miſery. This proved by Reaſon and Authority, Humane and Divine.* 2. *That he is forward to aſſiſt Man in acquiring Happineſs.* 3. *Divine Aſſiſtance, what it imports. The manner of it conſider'd and freed from Contradiction: This Aſſiſtance further proved in Fact, by God's Government of Chriſtians, Jews, and Pagans. The Idolatry of the Philoſophers,* examined. Sect. II. *Of God's Holineſs. From whence is inferr'd, what is neceſſary on our ſide to intitle us to Divine Aſſiſtance.*

WOuld Men talk coherently, the Aſſertion of my former Chapter would meet but few Oppoſers; none can be rationally allowed to deny the Poſſibility of Happineſs, but ſuch as aſſert Fate: For he that leaves to Man his Liberty, leaves him in a Capacity of Happineſs; it being hardly poſſible to conceive, that Man ſhould be free in his Choice of Good or Evil, and yet neceſſarily or unavoidably miſerable: beſides, few of thoſe who are fond of Fate, are willing to extend its Empire over the Liberty of Man's Mind; it being as eaſy to confute their Fancy, if they did, by ſome Inſtance of a free Choice, as it was by moving or walking to confute his, who deny'd Motion.

If

If it be in the next place conſider'd, that none can rationally maintain Fate, but ſuch as deny a God, ſince the Belief of a God does naturally include his Creation and Government of the World; and this again as naturally infers, either Vice or Vertue, Rewards or Puniſhments: but on the other hand, the Denial of a God, and the admitting no Principle of all things but *Matter*, does not only introduce a fatal Connection and Dependance of Events on their Cauſes, but alſo renders every Motion of the Mind of Man as neceſſary and determinate, as that of Fire, Wind, or Water. All this put together, amounts to thus much, That none ſhould exclude Happineſs, but ſuch as exclude God and Liberty out of the World; and ſince very few I hope are guilty of this, I ought to have very few Antagoniſts. But when I am to anſwer Objections, I am not to conſider ſo much what Men ſhould ſay, as what they do; nor muſt I chalk out my own Path, but follow Men in that they take, tho it be far enough from being the neareſt way. Since therefore Men are wont to impute their Miſery one while to God, and another while to Chance, now to Fate, and anon to Incapacity, I muſt examine what Truth or Juſtice there is in theſe Complaints.

In

In this Chapter therefore I ſhall not only vindicate God from all Aſperſions and Calumnies, but alſo fully aſſert the Love of God to Mankind, whereby I ſhall not only baffle all the poor Pretences of ſuch as charge God directly or obliquely with their Miſery, but alſo more ſtrongly eſtabliſh my own Poſition, by demonſtrating God's Readineſs to contribute all Aſſiſtance that is neceſſary to our Attainment of Happineſs. In proſecuting this I ſhall,

Firſt, Evince the Importance of entertaining right Notions of God.

Secondly, Becauſe of all God's Attributes, his Goodneſs and Holineſs have the moſt direct Influence on the preſent Queſtion, I ſhall particularly confine my ſelf to theſe two. To begin with the *Firſt*; If what *Epictetus* ſaid with reſpect to many Gods, had been ſpoke with reſpect to one, nothing had ever been ſaid with more exact Truth, or a bettter pois'd Judgment. The firſt and chief thing in Religion is to have rational and true Notions of God, it being otherwiſe impoſſible that Religion ſhould ſerve the great Intereſt of God's Glory and Man's Happineſs; for falſe and unworthy Notions of him muſt

True Notions of God, of great Importance

Τῆς περὶ τὸν Θεὸν εὐσεβείας ἴδιόν ἐστι τὸ χαριέστατον ἐκεῖνο εἶναι, ὀρθὰς ὑπολήψεις, περὶ αὐτοῦ ἔχειν. Epictet. Enchirid. c. 37.

needs bereave God of the Honour and Worſhip due to him from his Creatures, by alienating the Minds of Men, and betraying 'em into Superſtition, Idolatry, or Atheiſm: and thus that Religion which was deſigned to glorify God by the Manifeſtation and Acknowledgment of his Divine Excellencies and Perfections, and to advance Man into a State of Bleſſedneſs, by influencing his Life, and filling his Mind with Security and Chearfulneſs, ſhall be perverted to Ends directly contrary, and prove inſtrumental to diſhonour God, and render Man miſerable. The Truth of this has been too too evident in thoſe viſible Effects of Ignorance, of Miſrepreſentation of the Divine Nature amongſt the Gentiles; the want of conceiving aright his Omnipotence and Immenſity, *&c.* joined with the numerous Neceſſities of Mankind, did bring forth, or at leaſt confirm Polytheiſm; groundleſs Apprehenſions of Cruelty in God brought forth Superſtition, and the Abſurdities of Polytheiſm and Superſtition gave being to Atheiſm: and at this day there are many Miſchiefs which I muſt impute either to falſe Notions of God, or want of juſt Conſideration of the true ones, or at leaſt to not arguing clearly and truly from 'em. For from one of theſe Reaſons it proceeds, that the Worſhip of ſome Men is ſo

ſlight,

ſlight, empty and trifling; the Religion of others ſo melancholy and uncomfortable, and truly ſuperſtitious: and I am afraid there is too much of Atheiſtical Looſneſs, ſenſual, carnal Preſumption, and wretchleſs Deſpair, and many other Evils owing to the ſame Cauſe. Had Men worthy Notions of God, how were it poſſible they ſhould ever fancy that God would accept the Sincerity and Devotion of a Communicant ſitting but not kneeling? after Supper, but not in the Morning? that the Whiteneſs of the Garment would pollute and unhallow the ſpiritual Sacrifice of Prayer and Praiſes? and ſuch like. Would not a right Notion of God eaſily convince ſuch a weak and ſcrupulous Trifler, that God were not to be pleas'd but by ſincere and ſubſtantial Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, nor to be diſpleaſed but by voluntary Wickedneſs? all things elſe weighing nothing in the Ballance of the Sanctuary, and not deſerving the Notice or Regard of the Governour of the World: And tho ſuch an one ſhould ſuppoſe his Scruples warranted by Divine Command, and conſequently becauſe the Sovereignty of God renders all his Commandments indiſputably authoritative and binding, he ſhould therefore think himſelf as indiſpenſibly obliged to reject theſe things, as

to ſhun a Sin; yet even here a right underſtanding of the Divine Nature would ſoon inſtruct him how to diſtinguiſh the Divine Commands, and teach him that thoſe which did enjoin Holineſs and Righteouſneſs were the ſtanding and fundamental Laws of the Divine Government; that thoſe which did enjoin Duties ſubſervient to that end were of an inferiour Nature, and did bind in proportion to their Neceſſity and Tendency; that ſuch as did enjoin or forbid things of a more remote and diſtant Nature, Circumſtantial, Ritual, *&c.* were merely Poſitive and Arbitrary, temporary and mutable; and the interpoſing Neceſſity of ſuperiour Duties is at any time ſufficient to ſuperſede their Obligation. To proceed to other Effects of miſ-conceptions of the Divine Nature, how were it poſſible that any one who rightly underſtood the unſpeakable Goodneſs of God, ſhould, after he had done all he could, be tormented with doubtful Fears and Jealouſies concerning his State, nay ſometimes with a melancholy Dread of God, as if he were a hard Maſter, and impoſſible to be pleaſed? or how could ſuch a Perſwaſion as this, That one were damn'd from Eternity, and that neither Prayers, nor Tears, nor Induſtry, could ever reverſe the fatal Sentence, find any entertainment in that Man who were

were poſſeſſed with a true Senſe and firm Belief of the boundleſs Love which God has for all his rational Creatures?

It is evident therefore, of what Importance 'tis to propagate and ſettle in the Minds of Men a right underſtanding of the Divine Nature; and of all the Attributes of God, there are none that have a more immediate and powerful Influence either upon the Conduct of Man's Life, or the Comfort of his Mind, than theſe two, his Holineſs and Goodneſs: Theſe make us willing and deſirous to believe that there is a God, theſe make us love him and depend upon him, as one from whom we may rationally expect all that is good; *He that comes to God* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *muſt believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of all thoſe that diligently ſeek him.* Theſe Words do not only aſſert the Being of a God, but alſo his Holineſs and Goodneſs; both which may be clearly infer'd from three Propoſitions couch'd in thoſe words of the Apoſtle, *that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* Firſt, That all Men may ſeek God diligently if they will. Secondly, That it is the Deſire of God that they ſhould do ſo. And, Thirdly, That God will reward all that do ſo. On theſe Principles is Religion founded, on theſe Principles the Honour of God, and

Ὡς ὄντων, καὶ διοικούντων τὰ ὅλα καλῶς καὶ δικαίως. Epict.

the Happineſs of Man muſt be eſtabliſh'd. I will therefore diſcourſe here, firſt, Of the Goodneſs; and ſecondly, Of the Holineſs of God, which I diſtinguiſh from one another only for Method's ſake.

Treating of the Goodneſs of God, I will,

Firſt, Prove it by undeniable Arguments.

Secondly, I will ſhow that it extends it ſelf to Man.

Thirdly, I will explain the Nature of Divine Aſſiſtance, I mean that which God vouchſafes Man in order to Happineſs.

Firſt therefore, To begin with the Proofs of God's infinite Goodneſs.

Of the Goodneſs of God.

Cruelty was the Property of the Gentile Gods, and not of the true God; Humane Blood in which the *Canaanites*, *Carthaginians*, and others ſacrific'd, was an Oblation fit for *Baal*, *Moloch*, &c. that is, for Devils, not for God: Innate Wrath and Cruelty is inconſiſtent with a Happy Nature or a Happy State, for theſe are furious and tormenting Paſſions; nor can we imagin that ſuch a Being ſhould make its Reſidence in Heaven, a Place of Peace and Love, or be delighted with Hallelujah's and Adorations of Angels: This were no Pleaſure, no Muſick to a Being, in whom Wrath and Cruelty were predominant. Nor were thoſe Good, thoſe Holy, thoſe Chari-

Charitable Spirits fit Attendants, fit Miniſters for ſuch a Being. No, could we ſuppoſe (as ſome Hereticks once fanci'd) that there were two firſt Principles, a good, and bad one; could we ſuppoſe there were an Evil God, one in whom Cruelty and Wrath were his beloved Attributes; we muſt neceſſarily conclude that he would make Hell his Court, that his Guards and Courtiers would be Fiends and Furies; and that the Shrieks and Torments of wretched Creatures would be the Pleaſure, the Harmony he delighted in: this were a God fit for a *Hobbiſt*, one who can diſcern no difference between Vertue and Vice, between Good and Evil, between Love or Charity, and Deviliſhneſs. And yet I cannot in Charity but retract and condemn this Thought: for O! no other God is fit for him, but he whom he denieth! no other God is fit for ſuch a Wretch but the God of Love and Mercy! to whom I recommend him, and proceed.

All who believe a God, muſt believe him a moſt perfect Being; for whence elſe ſhould the ſcatter'd Perfections of his Creatures have beginning? But if any Man will ſay, that there is no difference between Perfections and Imperfections, I would know why doth he reverence Wiſdom more than Folly? or why he doats on Beauty rather

than Deformity? Or if he tell me, that he acknowledges a Diſtinction between Natural, but none between Moral Perfections or Imperfections; not to urge that the Vertues of the *Will* are as truly natural as thoſe of the Underſtanding, the Capacities of, and Aptitudes to each being born with us, tho not the Habits, and the one being as agreeable to the Nature, and conſonant to the Intereſt of Man as the other; I will ask him, why he does not love the Froward and Peeviſh, as well as the Sweet and Gentle? the Cruel and Implacable, as well as the Kind and Charitable? the Proud and Wilful, as well as the Humble and Modeſt? And whatever Anſwer he gives me, will abundantly ſerve to refute his Fancy. If then there be Natural and Moral Perfections, and God be the moſt perfect Being, we muſt needs aſcribe to him thoſe Properties which we look upon as Perfections in his Rational Creatures, and that in ſuch degrees as exempt him from all Imperfection: If therefore Goodneſs, Charity, Clemency be univerſally acknowledg'd for Perfections, we muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe them in God in the moſt perfect Degree. Nor let any one think it abſurd that the ſame ſhould be the Vertues of God and Man, of a finite and an infinite Being; for we ſuppoſe them

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in God in a manner ſutable to his Majeſty, and in Man in a manner ſutable to his Meanneſs; and unleſs we acknowledg this, there cannot poſſibly be any ſettled and certain Reaſon for our Love, or Hope, or Dependance, the great Parts of Divine Worſhip. That therefore God is good and merciful, a lover of Man, was ever the conſtant and unanimous Senſe of the wiſe and good Part of Mankind: Poets indeed and Painters, degenerous, daſtardly, cruel and vicious Men did repreſent the Deity under hideous Shapes, and in ſuch Colours, as their guilty Fears or Vices furniſh'd them with; but Philoſophers, as *Plutarch* obſerves, were always wont to repreſent him moſt amiable and lovely, always tempering his Majeſty with Love and Goodneſs, his Power and Juſtice with Tenderneſs, Mercy and Compaſſion. Hence it was that they were wont to attribute all thoſe things that were extreamly uſeful and beneficial to God as the Author of 'em, as Government, Laws, Arts and Sciences; they look'd upon their Gods as the Guides and Guardians of Men, and aſcrib'd to 'em whatever they atchieved bravely and happily in Life. But on the other hand, Frowardneſs, Wrath, and Cruelty did ever ſeem ſo ugly and deteſtable

Αποδεικνύντων τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ σεμνότητα μετὰ χρηστότητος καὶ μεγαλοφροσύνης, μετὰ βίας καὶ κηδεμονίας. Plutarch. *de Superſtitione.*

teſtable to wiſe and vertuous Men, that they not only deſpis'd, but abhorr'd as well the Wickedneſs as Folly of Superſtition, which repreſented God, or rather diſhonour'd him under ſuch Characters. And this Notion of the Deity, which repreſented that Being which was kind and benign, as terrible and dreadful; which was gracious and fatherly, as tyrannical; which was friendly and careful of us, as injurious and hurtful; which was mild and gentle, as fierce and ſavage; gave ſuch a Diſtaſte and Diſguſt to all ingenious Tempers, that they thought Atheiſm a much more excuſable Impiety than Superſtition: Hence is that of *Plutarch* (ſo generally prais'd by all Writers); I had rather Men ſhould ſay of me, there neither was, nor is ſuch a one as *Plutarch*, than that they ſhould ſay, that he was a Man of a fickle, unconſtant, froward, revengeful and implacable Temper. Let us not therefore entertain ſuch an Idea of God, as Human Nature would recoil from, and ſtart back, pale and ſcar'd at the ſight: Let us not faſten thoſe Characters upon God,

Οἱ δὲ δοξάζουσι φοβερὸν τὸ εὐμενὲς, καὶ Τυραννικὸν τὸ πατρικὸν, καὶ βλαβερὸν τὸ κηδεμονικὸν, καὶ τὸ ἀμικτὸν ἄγριον καὶ θηριώδες.

Ἔγωγ' οὖν ἂν ἐθέλοιμι μᾶλλον τοὺς ἀνθρώπους λέγειν περὶ ἐμοῦ, μήτε γεγονέναι τὸ παράπαν, μηδὲ εἶναι Πλούταρχον ἢ λέγειν, ὅτι Πλούταρχος ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος ἀβέβαιος, εὐμετάβολος, χερὴς πρὸς ὀργὴν, ἐπὶ τοῖς τυχοῦσι τιμωρητικὸς μικρόλυπος. Ibid.

God, which a good temper'd Man, if charg'd with them, would look upon as the fouleſt Reproaches and moſt injurious Accuſations; eſpecially ſince a Defect is not only more conſpicuous, but more reproachful, where there ſhould be nothing but Perfection: And Peeviſhneſs and Cruelty are infinitely more miſchievous in an Almighty, than Impotent Being. I might ſhun *Polycrates*, *Dionyſius*, *Periander*, but how ſhould I ſhun God? I might leave *Samos*, *Sicily*, or *Corinth*, and where Clemency and Juſtice made their Abode, I might make mine: But whither ſhould I go, what Place ſhould be my Refuge, if the Governour of the World were but an Almighty Tyrant? Thus 'tis manifeſt, ſuch kind of Repreſentations of God tend not to enamour Man of God, but to alienate and eſtrange him: they tend not to advance Religion, but Superſtition; they tend to make Men dread God, but not love him; they are therefore to be baniſh'd out of the World, and God is to be repreſented ſuch as our dear Lord, who lay in the Boſom of his Father, has reveal'd him, *A God of Hope, a God of Love, a God who is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* This is the Dictate of Nature; this is the Dictate of the Spirit, *God is Love.* Let it not be thought an abſurd or barren Tautology,

logy, tho I ſhould recite this one Text a thouſand times oftner than I do: for no Tongue can expreſs the Divine Nature ſo much to the Life, as his who was inſpir'd by the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Love.

God's dealings with the Pagans vindicated.

Nor let God's dealings with the Gentile World before the Revelation of Chriſtianity, be alledg'd as an Objection againſt the Goodneſs of God, and his Tenderneſs and Compaſſion for Mankind; 'tis true, *God in times paſt ſuffer'd all Nations to walk in their own ways; and the times of this Ignorance he winked at:* he publiſhed no reveal'd Law to the Gentiles from Heaven, he deputed no Prophets to 'em, as to his People the *Jews*, with a Commiſſion to reſtore by Signs and Miracles, that Natural Religion conformably to which they were to worſhip God; which is the Import of thoſe Places of St. *Paul*: and yet 'tis true that the Belief of the living and true God, and the natural Law of Good and Evil was ſtrangely effac'd and obliterated amongſt the Gentiles. But notwithſtanding all this, it muſt be remembred too, 1. That *God left not himſelf without a Witneſs* in any Age of Gentiliſm; the Heathen were never deſtitute of ſo much Light as might have conducted 'em to God, and that Happineſs he deſign'd 'em: for beſides the Traditions tranſmitted from *Noah* to Poſterity,

Act. 14. & 17.

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the Book of Nature and Providence was ever open to 'em, and this did in moſt legible Characters aſſert the Being of one Supreme God, and inſtructed 'em in the Knowledg of his Power and Goodneſs: Thus St. *Paul*, *Nevertheleſs he left not himſelf without a Witneſs in that he did Good, and gave us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seaſons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladneſs.* Nor was this Teſtimony ſo unſucceſsful, but that in all Ages there were ſome Excellent Men who did aſcribe the Original and Government of the World to God, and gave ſuch an account of his Holineſs and Goodneſs as was ſufficient to have founded a Rational and Excellent Worſhip upon: theſe were ſo many Lights ſhining in dark Places, as ſo many Juſtifications of Divine Providence, and Reproaches of Man's wilful Stupidity. Acts 14.

Sunt autem alii Philoſophi, & hi quidem magni atque nobiles, qui Deorum mente atq; ratione omnem Mundum adminiſtrari & regi cenſeant, neq; vero id ſolum, ſed etiam ab iiſdem vitæ hominum conſuli & provideri: Nam & fruges & reliqua quæ terra pariat, & tempeſtates, ac temporum varietates, Cœliq; mutationes, quibus omnia, quæ terra gignat, maturata pubeſcant, à Diis Immortalibus tribui generi humano putant. *Cic. l. 1. de Natura Deorum.*

2. 'Tis not in the leaſt to be doubted, but that the Nature of their Duty, and conſequently the Condition of their Happineſs was proportion'd and conform'd to thoſe Manifeſtations which God made 'em, to

thoſe

those Obligations which he laid before 'em, and to that Strength and Assistance which he vouchsafed 'em: for God is not a hard Master, he will not make good the Accusation of the wicked Servant; *he will not take up what he laid not down, nor reap what he did not sow.* In a word, if God do at the last Day deal with Men according to those several Oeconomies of his Providence which they were under; and if he has afforded all Nations Means proportionable to those Duties he required of them, and to those Degrees of Happiness to which he design'd them, then he was always the God of the *Gentiles* as well as once of the *Jews*, or now of the *Christians*; and there is no one part in the whole Series of Providence which can give us any Colour to call into question the Care or Goodness of God towards Mankind. This I think is enough to remove this Objection as it lay in my way: if my Design did not hasten me on, and I did not judg this satisfactory, I could easily make appear God's Goodness to the Gentiles, by presenting the Reader with a Scheme of the Religion of the *Pythagoreans*, *Platonics*, and *Stoics*; by examining the difference of the Idolatry of the wise and vertuous Part of the Gentile World, and that of the sottish and vicious Part of it; by considering the Assistances that God vouchsafed 'em, and giving

Luke 19.

giving an Account whence it came to paſs that the Worſhip of one true God by Holineſs and Vertue, was ſo far ſtifled and oppreſs'd in the Gentile World: But I have ſaid enough to vindicate the Goodneſs of God; and the State of Gentiles and Infidels does not ſo nearly concern my preſent Enquiry, as to deſerve ſo exact a Diſcuſſion.

Other Diſpenſations of God vindicated.

The Barrenneſs of ſome Countries, the Servitude and Poverty of ſome People is a much ſlighter Objection; for till it can appear, that Poverty is an Enemy to Vertue, or that Wealth, which is the Inſtrument of Luxury, and the Nurſe of Sloth and Wantonneſs, is abſolutely neceſſary to Man's Happineſs, it will weigh but very little againſt ſo many Demonſtrations of Divine Love, that he has not heap'd upon all Nations ſo many Temporal Bleſſings as might put 'em into a Capacity of being lazy, wanton and inſolent.

Now give me leave to make a ſtand, and like a Traveller when he has gain'd an Aſcent, look back upon the Way I have gone, and ſee how much of my Journey I have diſpatch'd: My Undertaking was to demonſtrate the Love of God to Mankind; thus far I have advanc'd towards this with undeniable Evidence; I have proved, That Peeviſhneſs, Malignity and Cruelty cannot

not belong to God, becauſe this were inconſiſtent with the Perfection of his Nature, or the Happineſs of his State: nor can it rationally be ſuppoſed, that the ſame Properties ſhould belong to thoſe evil Spirits which for a long time deluded the World, and that God who has done ſo much to deſtroy that Kingdom of Darkneſs, to reſcue Man, and reſtore him to a Capacity of Happineſs and Glory; how could it be, that God ſhould have done ſo much, as it appears he has, in the Contexture of our Nature, and the Contrivance of our State, to make us in love with Goodneſs, and irreconcilable Enemies to Tyranny, Cruelty, Arbitrary Revenge, *&c.* if he himſelf were paſſionate, furious, and arbitrary in his Cruelties? Nay, I have advanc'd further, and have prov'd, *Secondly*, That boundleſs Love and Goodneſs are the unqueſtionable Attributes of God; for the very ſame Arguments which exclude all manner of Imperfections and Evils from the Deity, do neceſſarily aſſert to it all manner of Perfection and Good: Nor doth the unconceivable Majeſty and Eminence of the Divine Nature only, but alſo the Indigence and Weakneſs of Human Nature require this; ſince without it, he could not be the Object of our Love or Dependance, nor conſequently our Worſhip.

Having

Having proceeded thus far, and prov'd that Tyranny or Cruelty are utterly repugnant to the Divine Nature, and boundleſs Love and Goodneſs the Eſſential and Inſeparable Properties of it; I can ſcarce think it neceſſary to prove that the Emanations of this his Goodneſs do extend even to Man: for tho the *Epicureans* acknowledging God perfect, did at the ſame time allow him no other Imployment than the Enjoyment of his own Perfections; and tho *Ariſtotle* confin'd the Providence of God, and conſequently the Irradiation of his Goodneſs, within Heaven; and tho, laſtly, before the Creation of the World, we are uncapable of conceiving any Subjects, about which Divine Love could exerciſe it ſelf, and conſequently can conceive of it no otherwiſe than confin'd within himſelf; all which ſeems to conclude thus much, that the Deity may be infinitely good, and yet this Goodneſs not extend it ſelf to Man; all this concerns not our preſent Queſtion: for tho Man ſhould not be the Object of Divine Goodneſs, yet if God be infinitely good, this will be enough to free Man from unreaſonable and ſuperſtitious fear of him, and to acquit God from the leaſt ſuſpicion of being the Cauſe of Human Miſery; which is the utmoſt I was oblig'd to make good, in purſuance of

the Deſign of this Chapter. Beſides, they who accuſe God of their Miſery, do not ſuppoſe him unconcern'd about all things but himſelf, as *Epicurus*; nor bound and limit his Providence within the Incloſures of Heaven; but do plainly ſuppoſe all the Affairs of Mankind to depend upon the firſt Contrivance of God in the Creation, or upon the over-ruling Influences of his Providence in his preſent Government of the World.

However, I am not willing to quit one Inch of the Ground I have got, and therefore,

The Goodneſs of God extends to Man.

Secondly, I muſt now take notice, That the Goodneſs of God extends to Man, and has a particular Regard to his Happineſs. The World being now created, and Mankind form'd after God's Image (τῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν, *we are his Offspring*, ſaith St. *Paul* out of the Poet) unactive and unconcern'd Love ſeems to me a Contradiction, and infinite boundleſs Goodneſs confin'd within Heaven cannot but ſeem as groſs an one: let it therefore remain an unſhaken Truth, that God is good, and that this Goodneſs doth exert and expreſs it ſelf towards Mankind, and we ſhall from hence gain theſe two Points.

1. That

1. That God is not the Cauſe of Man's Miſery: and what is more yet;

2. That he is moſt ready and willing to further and aſſiſt him in all his Endeavours after Happineſs.

The firſt of theſe is apparent: for if God be infinitely good, then every thing that came out of his Hands muſt in the ſtate of its Creation have been exceeding good; the end of the Creation muſt have been ſomething extremely kind and gracious; and the Law he preſcrib'd his Creatures for the attainment of that End, muſt be as good as wiſe: this muſt have been the glorious State of things when God contrived this wonderful Frame of Nature, when he erected this vaſt Work, the World; and in all the continued Progreſs of Divine Providence we are to expect no other Acts of Government than what may become the moſt gracious Prince, the moſt tender Father; for the ſame immenſe Goodneſs that once created, doth ever continue to rule the World: Let us not therefore accuſe God but our ſelves, if we be not happy. Bleſſings indeed and Mercies, like warm Sun and fruitful Seaſons, deſcend upon us without our Importunity or Merit;

but Evils and Miſchiefs come not till our Sins and Provocations have pull'd 'em down upon us. *Solon* indeed in *Herodotus* tells *Cræſus*, τὸ θεῖον φθονερὸν ἐὸν καὶ ταραχῶδες, That the Deity was envious and froward, and delighted to magnify it ſelf in the diſturbance of the ſettled Happineſs and Calm of poor Men: But alas! 'tis our Fondneſs or our Pride, our Peeviſhneſs or our Wantonneſs, which raiſes in us theſe unworthy Thoughts of God; he may indeed, like a kind Parent, train up a Son through a ſtrict Diſcipline to Vertue and Glory, he may throw Difficulties into our way on purpoſe to reward our Conqueſt, he may like a wiſe Phyſician reſtore us to our Health by bitter Potions, and will like an excellent Governour puniſh, if need be, our wanton Contempt of Love and Mercy, by Severity and Chaſtiſements; but he will never, like a ſalvage Tyrant, delight in the Sufferings or Ruine of innocent or humble Subjects; he will never preſcribe impoſſible Laws, that he may enjoy the Pleaſure of bloody Executions; he will never make the Groans of wretched People his Muſick, nor think Miſery and Death the beſt Marks of his abſolute Power, or faireſt Ornaments of his Throne: No, we ſhall never need any other Proof to clear the Divine Majeſty from any ſuch Imputation, than

than to examine our ſelves, and reflect upon our own Behaviour; we ſhall ſoon find that we alone are guilty of our Ruine, and that God is utterly free from it; our exceſſive Enjoyments create the Diſeaſes of the Body, and our exceſſive Paſſion the Pains and Torments of the Mind, and moſt of the Changes in our Fortune derive themſelves from both: a languiſhing Body, and a languiſhing Reputation, a broken Eſtate, and a dejected Mind are the common Effects of a diſorderly and debauch'd Life; and ſuch a Life is the natural Effect of a Mind enſlaved to the Body, and eſtranged from God, not only by a Neglect, but by a Contempt and Defiance of all thoſe Means by which a good God deſign'd to bring him through Vertue to Glory; and then at laſt a guilty Conſcience, a diſtracted Mind, and a moſt melancholy, miſerable Death, is the Conſequence and End of all: This is the Progreſs which our voluntary Sin and Folly makes; we cannot think that a good God can direct or neceſſitate us to theſe Courſes, they are as repugnant to his Laws, as to our own Intereſt; and the ſame time we forfeit our Happineſs, we diſappoint his Love and Goodneſs: all the Ways and Methods of God are kind and gracious, and wiſe and rational; inanimate Bodies do not deſert thoſe Offices

he has prescrib'd 'em; Animals move regularly by those Instincts he has implanted in them, and so both the one and the other do necessarily serve those excellent Ends for which they were created: But Man having no Necessity but Liberty wove into the Constitution of his Nature, and having no compulsory but only directing Law prescrib'd him, has perverted his own Ways, abus'd his Liberty, and made that his Ruine, which if well-us'd had enhanc'd his Merit and Reward. This is the Account which the Scripture gives us of Man's Misery, it imputes it wholly to himself, and represents his Obstinacy as ungrateful and displeasing to God, as
Hos. 13. 'tis fatal to himself: *O Israel, thou hast destroy'd thy self. As I live, I delight not in the*
Ezek. 38. *Death of a Sinner; turn ye, turn ye, why will*
Mat. 23. *ye die? O* Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee: how often would I have gather'd thy Children together, even as a Hen gathers her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not?* Nor is this Account of things which the Scripture gives us any other than that which was generally embrac'd by the Heathens, this being not the Sense of any particular Prepossessions or private Opinions instill'd by Custom or Education, but of natural Reason, and fairly and easily deduc'd from

from those Notions of Divine Goodness which were universally entertain'd by all judicious and understanding Heathens: and how scandalous a thing were it, if that comfortable and heavenly Truth which the Darkness and Idolatry of the Superstitious could not extinguish in the Pagan World, should be rejected or suppress'd by Christians? Not the Will of the Gods, but the Luxury and Riot of Men, is the Cause of those Evils which infest the Body, *&c.* Hence that charitable Piece of Heathen Devotion;

Οἱ Θεοὶ τῶν κακῶν εἰσιν ἀναίτιοι, καὶ νόσοι, καὶ ὅσα πάθη σώματος ἀκολασίας ἔστι σπέρματα, &c.——Γνώσῃ δ' ἀνθρώπους αὐθαίρετα πήματ' ἐχοντας Τλήμονας. Jamblichus de Vita Pythag. l. 1, & 2.

Σεῦ πάτερ ἢ πολλῶν τε κακῶν παυσείας ἅπαντας, Ibid.
Ἢ πᾶσιν δείξαις οἵῳ τῷ δαίμονι χρῶνται.

O Father Jove, *from numerous Evils free*
Mankind, or shew 'em their Ruine's not from thee,
A gracious and benign Deity;
But from themselves———.

I will here add a Testimony of *Apuleius*, as containing the Sense of the *Platonic* Philosophy in this Point of God's Government of Mankind: All the Motions

Omnia quæ naturaliter & propterea rectè feruntur, Providentiæ Cuſtodia gubernantur, nec ullius mali Cauſa Deo poterit aſcribi. *Apuleius de Dogmate Platonis.*

of Providence are wiſe and regular, nor muſt any Evil be aſcribed to God as its Cauſe. But this is not all we gain from the Aſſurance of God's Infinite Goodneſs, that we have no reaſon to apprehend any Harm or Miſchief from him, that he cannot be the Author of our Miſery; but we may confidently perſwade our ſelves on the other ſide,

Secondly, That he is moſt ready and willing to further and aſſiſt us in all our Endeavours after Happineſs. And now methinks I am ſo far from queſtioning the Poſſibility of attaining Happineſs, that I begin already to feel and enjoy it; I ſee the Day breaking in upon me from above; how can he chooſe but be happy who is the Love, the Care of God! I may walk like *Peter* on the Waves, and bid defiance to the Storms, I know I ſhall never ſink, whilſt that God upholds me, who calls me this way to him; I can now eaſily believe that my Temper may be transform'd, my Corruptions may be put off, and I be made partaker of a Divine Nature; ſince the Spirit of God will dwell with me, the Light of God will always ſhine upon me, and the Power of God will always

always ſuccour and aid me: Can I imagine as much as any Colour or Pretext, why I ſhould not now be able to attain to an excellent State of Vertue, or why this Vertue ſhould not be able to vanquiſh all thoſe Difficulties that oppoſe my Happineſs, ſince I am aſſur'd that God will not refuſe me his Spirit if I ask it, and that his Grace will be ſufficient for me?

You ſee of what vaſt Importance this Truth is, that God will be always ready to aſſiſt every Man in his Endeavours after Happineſs: and therefore tho it ſtand here as a neceſſary and undeniable Concluſion from the foregoing Diſcourſe, tho the Perfection of the Divine Nature do amount to a little leſs than a Demonſtration of it; for * Beneficence to his Creatures is as neceſſarily included in the Notion of Perfection, as Perfection is in the Notion of a God; yet as well for my own Pleaſure, as the Intereſt of my Poſition which is nearly concern'd in this Truth, I will dwell a little longer on the Confirmation and Illuſtration of it. There are three eminent Acts of Divine Aſſiſtance; The *Firſt* is ſuch a Direction of the Events of

* Εἰ γὰρ μὴ τέλειον οὐκ ἀ-
ταρκὲς, εἰ δὲ οὐκ αὐταρκὲς οὐ-
τέλειον, εἰ δὲ αὐταρκὲς, μηδὲ
τέλειον, πῶς ἰσχυρὸν; αὐταρ-
κὲς δὲ ὂν καὶ τέλειον καὶ ἰσχυρὸν
κατὰ μὲν τὴν τελειότητα τὰ ἀγα-
θὰ βούλεται· κατὰ ταὶ τὴν αὐ-
ταρκειαν ἔχει· κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἰσχ-
ύνταται, βουλόμενος δὲ καὶ ἔχ-
ει, δυναμένος κατὰ τὸ μὴ δ
Max. Tyrius Diſſer. 22.

Divine Aſſiſtance, what it imports.

of Secular Affairs, that they may tend to our Good: The *Second* is his Aſſiſtance of us in the Attainment of Vertue: And the *Third* is, his recruiting us by freſh Supplies of Strength in all our hazardous Conflicts and extraordinary Trials. Now tho I could not give an Account of the manner how God performs this kind Work of his Providence, yet ought not that to diſſwade me from the belief of it; becauſe we know that our Comprehenſion ought not to be the Standard of Divine Perfections, nor the narrow Bounds of our Imagination be the utmoſt Extent of the Almighty's Power. However 'tis not difficult to explain this Aſſiſtance of God in ſuch ſort as may free it from the leaſt ſuſpicion of implying a Contradiction.

For, *Firſt*, As to his Direction and Conduct of temporal Events, how eaſy will it be for us to conceive this poſſible to God, if we conſider, Firſt, That God can form what Impreſſions he pleaſes in the Minds of Men, and inſpire 'em with what Affections he ſhall think moſt ſerviceable to his Deſigns? for there is not the leaſt Pretext or Colour to imagine that the Soul is any more exempt from the Soveraignty of God than the Body; or that God cannot do that which

which the Great, or the Cunning, or the Eloquent, nay the Popular and Ambitious do ſeldom fail to do, raiſe what Paſſions he pleaſes in the Mind of Man. Or if we conſider, Secondly, That the Power and Efficacy of Nature is wholly in his Hands, that Life or Death, Plenty or Poverty, every thing depends upon his Will; for the Winds and Seas, Earth and Air, Fire, Hail and Vapour obey his Voice, and are all of 'em, as often as he pleaſes, the Inſtruments and Executioners of his Will: he that ſtills the Ragings of the Multitude, and becalms the Paſſions of the Mighty; he at whoſe Command new Creatures enter upon the Stage of the World, and the old leave it; what is it impoſſible for him to do? nay, what is it this Almighty Governour cannot do, without moving one ſtep out of the common Road of his Providence, without imploying any extraordinary Inſtrument, or exerting any Act of extraordinary Power? for what ſecular Intereſt can there be imagin'd whoſe Succeſs or Diſappointment depends not upon ſome or other of theſe natural Cauſes? And yet we muſt acknowledg further, Thirdly, That the Almighty has not prefix'd or ſet himſelf ſuch immutable, unalterable Laws, but that he has reſerved to himſelf the Prerogative of ſuſpend-

ing

ing or over-ruling 'em when he pleaſes, I mean with reſpect to the Motions of natural Bodies, or Revolutions of ſecular Affairs; and if ſuch an Interpoſal of Divine Power cannot be conceiv'd to be other than a Miracle, I muſt confeſs, I do not look upon one Age only, but every Age an Age of Miracles; nay, I believe ſuch as theſe wrought every Day for the Protection or Relief of thoſe who depend upon this Governour of the World: for I know not to what purpoſe I ſhould, like *Jonah* or his Mariners, call upon God in a Storm, if it were never to be laid, till it had naturally ſpent its Force and Fury; I know not to what purpoſe I ſhould implore the Almighty's Direction upon all my Deliberations in perplex'd and intangled Affairs, if I could expect no other Light than what my labouring Mind could give it ſelf; I know not why I ſhould addreſs my ſelf to God in the Pains and Danger of an inſupportable Diſeaſe, if the Medicines will be the ſame, and their Virtue the ſame, if the Fever will abate, and its Flames be extinguiſh'd, or extinguiſh Life in the ſame degree and manner, if I pray, or if I do not. All theſe ways of Divine Providence are very plain and intelligible, and therefore 'tis manifeſt that we may without any Abſurdity aſcribe to

God

God ſuch a Superintendency and Direction over Humane Affairs, as may render the Iſſue of 'em moſt ſerviceable to the true Intereſt of thoſe that worſhip him.

As to the ſecond Part of Divine Aſſiſtance, which conſiſts in aiding us in the Attainment of Holineſs and Vertue, I do readily acknowledg as far as this is perform'd by the internal Operations of his Spirit, by the Influx of Divine Light or Heavenly Vigour, I do no more underſtand the τὸ πῶς, the manner of Sanctification, than that of the Creation of the Soul; this I know, that Vertue is the rational Work of a rational Creature, 'tis the Work of Man, tho aſſiſted by God; 'tis a rational Work, which implies the Knowledg of our Duty, and a Power to perform it: and therefore this I know, that this Aid muſt conſiſt in the Improvement of my rational Faculties in ſome acceſſion to the Reaſon of my Underſtanding, and to the Power and Liberty of my Will. Now tho I cannot comprehend how God does this, yet how eaſily can I believe it poſſible for him to do it, ſince 'tis natural to imagine, that he who created my Underſtanding can improve it, and he who inveſted me with a rational Liberty can confirm or enlarge it, or, if you pleaſe, reſcue it from that diſeas'd and ſervile Condition,

unto

unto which it was degenerated, and reſtore it to the Health and Soundneſs of its firſt State?

The third Act of Divine Providence does not imply a new manner, but a new degree of Aſſiſtance, and therefore contains in it no new Difficulty: and as to the Truth and Certainty of this ſort of Aſſiſtance, no Man who believes the Goſpel can queſtion it, ſince this every where aſcribes as well *Perfection* as Converſion to God, as well the *Finiſhing* as the *Beginning* of *Sanctification* to his Grace; it every where promiſes us the *Might* and *Power* of God's Spirit to *ſtrengthen* and *eſtabliſh* us, and *exhorts* us *to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help us in the time of need.*

This Time which I have ſpent upon the Illuſtration of Divine Goodneſs towards Man, will not I hope be judg'd miſimploy'd or loſt, if it be conſider'd that ſuch is the Confidence, or rather ſuch is the Wantonneſs of ſome Men, that they reject every thing which carries in it, I will not ſay, any ſeeming Contradiction, but any ſeeming Difficulty.

A further Proof of Divine Aſſiſtance, from Divine Government.

But it doth not ſo nearly concern the Happineſs of Man to be inſtructed in the manner, as to be throughly perſwaded of the

the Truth of Divine Aſſiſtance; and therefore chooſing rather to be tedious than defective in the Proof of it, I will add to thoſe Arguments taken from the Nature of God, whatever Force and Strength can be derived from the Conſideration of Divine Government, which is the Expreſſion of the Divine Nature, and the Image of its Perfection viſible in its Effects.

The Goſpel contains this Doctrine in almoſt every Page, and the Lives of Apoſtles and Martyrs are ſo many illuſtrious Inſtances of the Divine Faithfulneſs and Love, performing thoſe Promiſes which he had made 'em by his Son. The Jewiſh Polity was a Theocracy, God did for a great while preſide over 'em immediately, and govern them (if I may ſo ſpeak) without a Subſtitute or Vice-roy; repeated Miracles, repeated Prophecies, extraordinary Manifeſtations of himſelf, and extraordinary Revelations were the illuſtrious Proofs of God's Affection and Care for that People; ſo that it were to inſult over my Reader's Patience, or to reproach his Stupidity, if I ſhould go about to confirm this Truth from the Old or New Teſtament: 'tis therefore only neceſſary to examine what the Heathen thought of the Neceſſity of this Divine Aſſiſtance, and

what

what Inſtances of it may be found amongſt them.

Whether the Gentiles had any Notion of the Fall and Corruption of Man is not here neceſſary to be enquired; but this I am ſure, they were extreamly ſenſible of that Oppoſition which Vertue met with from the World and the Body; they were extreamly ſenſible that the Inclinations of the one, and the Affluence and Troubles of the other did naturally tend to engage 'em in Vice; and therefore tho they do ſometimes magnify Human Nature, yet they were not ſo forgetful of their own Infirmities, or the Condition of this Life, as not to judg the Aſſiſtance of God indiſpenſably neceſſary to render them vertuous and happy: Hence 'tis that *Pythagoras*, *Socrates* and *Plato* were eminent in that part of Religion which conſiſts in Prayer and Invocation: Σωκράτης εἰς παρρησίαν κατὰ τὴν προσευχομένος τῷ θεῷ, καὶ τὰς ἄλλας προσέρπετο, καὶ ἦν ὁ βίος Σωκράτους μέσος εὐχῆς. *The Life of* Socrates *was a Life of Prayer.* And hence it was that they did generally aſcribe their Laws to thoſe Gods from whom they received their Oracles; the *Cretans*, *Romans*, &c. not more confidently believing that they received their Laws from *Minos*, *Numa Pompilius*, &c. than that theſe received

Max. Tyr. Diſſer. 30.

ceived them from *Jove*, *Ægeria*, and other Gods: and I wonder not that *Cicero* ſhould ſomewhere ſay, *Nunquam vir magnus ſine Divino afflatu*, *That there never was a great Man who enjoy'd not ſome Divine Impulſe*; ſince it did ſo generally obtain through the Pagan World to attribute all the ſurprizing Excellencies, or extraordinary Exploits of their Heroes and eminent Men to the immediate Favour and Patronage of their Gods. Muſt *Veſpaſian* reſtore Life to the expiring State of *Rome*? Prodigies and Miracles ſhall prepare his way; and the extraordinary Marks of ſome Divine Aſſiſtance ſhall conſecrate and deſtine him to this great Work. Muſt *Alexander* conquer the Eaſtern World? Miracles ſhall attend his March as it did that of *Moſes*, and the *Pamphylian* Sea retreat before the one, as the Red Sea did before the other: nor let any one think that this was uſual only amongſt the barbarous People; *Athens* it ſelf, *Athens*, the very abode of Wit and Philoſophy, did attribute the Perfections of *Eleuſinian Meleſagoras* and *Cretan Epimenides* to the Inſtruction of ſome Divine Being, and thoſe of *Socrates* to his Guardian Angel, as well as the *Scythians* thoſe of their *Zamolxis*, or they of *Proconeſus* thoſe of *Ariſteas*, to the peculiar Favour and Aſſiſtance of their

Hiſt. Rom.

Joſephus.

Gods; nor ought it to seem strange that the Works of *Hesiod*, *Homer*, or other Poets should be ascribed by the Heathens to Divine Inspiration, since those of *Aholiab* and *Bezaleel* are by *Moses* himself ascrib'd to the Spirit of God; for the Poems of the former could not but seem to the Heathens as rich a piece of Fancy, as the Embroideries of the latter did to the *Jews*: and this puts me in mind of an excellent Argument *Maximus Tyrius* makes use of to prove Vertue to be derived from the Assistance and Bounty of God. *If Arts* (saith he) *less excellent in their Nature, and less useful in their End, be owing to God, how much more Vertue, the Divine Guide and Comfort of Human Life?* If there be no Good that descends not from above, much less surely the Chief and Soveraign Good of Man, ἀλλὰ μὴν ἀρετὴ ἔστιν ἄλλου ἀνθρώπου ἄγαθον ὃ μὴ παρὰ θεῶν ἥκει. Thus far I have proceeded to shew you what the Heathens thought of the necessity of Divine Assistance, particularly in the attainment of Vertue; for as to Secular Matters and Temporal Events, their Sense of the over-ruling Power and Influence of Divine Providence was so notorious, that 'tis not to be call'd into question; the Being and Providence of God (in this sense of it) seem'd so inseparable, that

Max. Tyr. Disser. 22.

that the *Epicurean* who deny'd the latter, could never find Belief when he profeſs'd himſelf to own the former: Nay, even thoſe very Men who could not be convinc'd of a Providence by the Bounty, were convinced of it by the Severity of God in his Chaſtiſement of Sins; hence that bold and brisk, tho not very religious Reflection of *Tacitus* upon the Miſeries the Roman Empire ſuffer'd under *Galba*, *Otho* and *Vitellius*, Nec enim unquam atrocioribus populi Romani Cladibus, magiſve juſtis Judiciis approbatum eſt: non eſſe Curæ Diis ſecuritatem noſtram, eſſe Ultionem. *The Juſtice and the Greatneſs of our Plagues abundantly evince the Gods concern'd, tho not for our Proſperity, yet for our Puniſhment*; ſuch is Man's diſingenuous Temper, that he is more eaſily convinc'd by the wideneſs and fatality of a Wound, that it was inflicted by an Almighty Arm, than he is by the greatneſs of the Benefits he receives, that they are diſtributed by a Divine Munificence; tho the number and infinite value of the good things we receive be in it ſelf a much clearer Proof of a Divine Providence than the Evils we ſuffer can be; for theſe we can create our ſelves, thoſe none but a God can beſtow. There needs then nothing to be ſaid to convince you what the Heathens

Tacit. l. 1. Hiſt.

thought of Providence with respect to outward and temporal Things; nor is it I think now to be question'd, whether it were their Opinion that the Divine Assistance was necessary to the Attainment of Vertue and Happiness; nor would I add a word more but that the words of *Hierocles* on this Subject carry in them not only so full a Conviction, but also so extraordinary a Relish of a Wise and Religious Humility, that I cannot prevail with my self to pass them by: that is, *We need no Motive or Incentive to Vice but our own Inclinations; but to make us Vertuous we stand in need of the Aid of God, join'd with that of Reason.*

Καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖ κακῶν ἀρχῆς, οὔτε ἐνυπονοιμένης, οὔτε ἔξοθεν κακοποιὸν αἰτίαν ἐνδιδούσης. Ἀγαθῶν δὲ δεῖ ἀρχῆς μάλιστα καὶ μόνης, καὶ τὴν μὲν κεχωρισμένης τῶν λογικῶν οὐσιῶν, οἷός ἐστιν ὁ Θεός. τὴν δὲ ἐνυπαρχούσης αὐταῖς καὶ τῇ κατ' οὐσίαν ἐπαφῇ κυβερνώσης, οἷός ἐστιν ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος. Hierocles *in Pythagoræ Aurea Carm.*

And this Opinion of the Necessity of God's Assistance sprung not only from the Experience of the Weakness and Corruption of Human Nature, but also of the Power and Goodness of the Divine Nature; for I cannot think that the Order, Beauty and Greatness of the Creation, the fixt and constant Returns of fruitful Seasons, *the filling Mens Hearts with Food and Gladness*, were the only Testimonies which God gave the Gentiles of himself, and his

Care

Care for Mankind: when I read that Angels are the miniſtring Spirits of God; when I read in *Daniel*, of the Princes of *Græcia* and *Perſia*, and find that Provinces were committed to Angels as the Vice-roys and Lieutenants of God, I cannot think that theſe devout and charitable Spirits did with leſs Zeal in their Provinces labour to promote the Honour of God, and the Good of Man, than evil Spirits did the Diſhonour of the one, and the Ruin of the other: and unleſs the frequent Appearances of Angels in the beginning had poſſeſs'd Mens Minds with a firm Perſwaſion that there was a conſtant Commerce maintain'd between Heaven and Earth; and that Spirits very frequently did viſibly engage themſelves in the Protection and Aſſiſtance of Men; I cannot as much as imagine what Foundation there cou'd be for the numerous Impoſtures of Oracles, or upon what ground the Cuſtom of putting themſelves under the Patronage of ſome Tutelar Spirit, could ſo generally have prevail'd in the Pagan World: without this Suppoſition, the Poetry of *Homer* had been ſo far from being entertain'd as Sacred and Inſpir'd, that it had been univerſally contemn'd and diſlik'd as an idle Rhapſody of unnatural, incredible and fulſome Characters of their Gods:

How could any Man, who had never heard of the Appearances of Spirits, nay who could not conceive any other Notion of such Fancies than as something absurd and impossible, ever digest the gross Confidence of a Poet bringing in a God upon the Stage at every turn? I do not therefore doubt, but that the Gentile World received very many good Offices and Advantages from good Angels, as well as suffer'd many Mischiefs from evil ones: and I think I might with good probability believe that every good Heathen as well as *Socrates* had the Assistance of a good Spirit very frequently.

Nor was the Ministry of Angels the only Assistance that God afforded the Gentile World, but in every Age he rais'd up wise and good Men to be his Prophets or Interpreters of Nature's Law to the Gentiles: I know St. *Austin* does in two places at least of his Retractations censure and condemn that Charity which he had elsewhere express'd for the Philosophers or Excellent Men among the Gentiles; which is the more to be wondred at, since he so frequently acknowledges himself to have been first inflamed with the holy Love of true Philosophy by reading a Piece of *Tully*: but were the matter to be carried by Votes,

I do not queſtion but I could produce Teſtimonies in favour of thoſe Men, of ſuch whoſe Antiquity, Learning and Piety might more than ballance the Authority of St. *Auſtin*. 'Tis true, their Faith differ'd much from that of a *Chriſtian*, and no Man, I think, in his Wits could expect it otherwiſe; for how vaſt is the Diſtance between the Light of Nature and that of Revelation? But if we look upon thoſe Motives and Principles to Vertue by which they were acted, they were ſuch as a Chriſtian need not bluſh at, or be aſhamed of: they look'd upon it not only as the Perfection of Human Nature, the Bond and Support of Society, the Delight, the Guide and Comfort of every particular Man's Life, but alſo as the Image of God, that which did render us like him, and therefore acceptable to him; as the only thing that could unite Man to God, that could raiſe Man above the bodily Pollutions of Senſuality, that could enable him to out-brave the Fears of Fortune and of Death; as that which could fit him for the Converſation of Heaven; and laſtly, they look'd upon it as the Gift of God.

The Idolatry of the Philoſophers diſtinguiſhed from the Vulgar.

'Tis true, together with all this, you'l ſay they were Idolaters; I do not queſtion but they did often partake in the Pollution of

the Idolatrous Multitude. But if we regard the Idolatry of their Religion, and compare it with that of the Heathen Multitude, there was a vaſt difference between both; and that in theſe three Points: the Object, the Acts of Worſhip, and the Effects of it.

As to the Object, the Philoſophers, 'tis true, did worſhip Spirits, but good ones; the Multitude did worſhip Devils: how contradictory are thoſe Characters which the ſenſual, infatuated Multitude beſtow'd upon their Idols, and thoſe by which the Philoſophers deſcribe the Nature of their Gods or their *Genii*? Luſt and Cruelty make up the one; Purity, Goodneſs and Charity the other: This needs no Proof, 'tis evident from almoſt all the Writings of antient Philoſophy that are extant: yet I think it cannot ſeem ſuperfluous to produce one Teſtimony containing an Account of the Nature of their *Genii* or Guardian Angels, by which it will be eaſy to conclude what Notion they had of thoſe Superiour Spirits whom they ſuppoſed to dwell always in Heaven in the preſence of the Supreme God; and whom, tho they call'd 'em Gods, they thought infinitely inferiour to that one God, their Creator and ours; but yet much ſuperiour as well

in the Excellency of their Nature, as Dignity of their Place, to thoſe Angels which they look'd upon as the Meſſengers and Miniſters of God to Man, and as the Guardians of Man, and the Interpreters or Conveyers of his Requeſts to God. Theſe are thus deſcrib'd by *Apuleius*, the Subſtance of all which is, This our truly Guardian Angel, our immediate Superintendent, the Domeſtick Spy of all our Actions, the conſcious Witneſs of our Deſires and Thoughts, the Approver and Encourager of our Vertue, and the Hater and Diſcourager of our Vice, if he be heedfully minded by us, rightly known, and religiouſly worſhipp'd with Righteouſneſs and Innocence, as he was by *Socrates*, will be our Counſel in doubtful, our Guard in hazardous Affairs, *&c.* But all this while they were Idolaters: admit it; if they were damn'd for this Idolatry, good God! what will become of that great part of the Chriſtian Church, whoſe Practice at this day is infinitely more inexcuſable than

Hic quem dico prorſus Cuſtos, ſingularis Præfectus, domeſticus Speculator, prorſus Curator, intimus Cognitor, aſſiduus Obſervator, individuus Arbiter, inſeparabilis teſtis, malorum improbator, bonorum probator, ſi rite animadvertatur, ſedulo cognoſcatur, religioſe colatur, ita ut à *Socrate* Juſtitia & Innocentia cultus eſt, in rebus incertis proſpector, dubiis præmonitor, periculoſis tutator, egenis opitulator; qui tibi queat tum in Somnis, tum in Signis, tum etiam forſitan coram, cum uſus poſtulat, mala averruncare, bona proſperare, humilia ſublimare, immania fulcire, obſcura clarare, ſecunda regere, adverſa corrigere. *Apuleius de Deo Socratis*, p. 68.

than theirs was? because God has publickly declared that he has appointed one Mediator, through whom he wills us to approach him: There was then room for the Plea of Humility; but now a Pretence of Humility, what can it be in reality, but wanton Fondneſs or preſumptuous Wilfulneſs?

Thus widely did the vertuous and underſtanding part of Mankind differ in the Object of their Worſhip from the ſenſual and ſtupid Herd. And ſince the manner of Worſhip is naturally derived from the Notions Men entertain of that Being which is the Object of it; it could not be otherwiſe, but that they muſt differ as widely in the eſſential Parts of Worſhip as they did in the Objects of it. Hence it was, that while the People offer'd to their Gods their Luſts and Paſſions, and ſacrific'd to them in Uncleanneſs or Cruelty, the Philoſophers thought that nothing could be ſo welcome a Sacrifice to theirs as the Imitation of their Purity and Goodneſs, holy Affections and good Works. From both theſe Differences there follow'd a

Third, Conſiſting in the different Effects which the Religion of the one and the other did produce; the Idolatry of the one (as

(as Wickedness always will) utterly estrang'd them more and more from the true God; the Idolatry of the other (for so I'll call it to avoid Dispute) seem'd to unite them more and more to him, since they look'd upon the Spirits they worshipp'd, not only as the Creatures, but most lively Images of the true God; and acknowledg'd that all good Gifts proceeded from him, tho they received 'em by the Ministry and Mediation of Angels, and that Vertue which they look'd upon as the only grateful Worship of God did exalt their Minds, and by rendring 'em more like him, must needs render 'em more near to him. Thus they talk'd, whether thus they liv'd or no is not very material to my present purpose; for after all, tho their Lives should not have come up to their Philosophy, these their Discourses could not choose but be some way serviceable to Mankind, being a manifest Reproof to the stupid Idolatry, to the brutish and barbarous Worship which then prevailed in the World. These Doctrines could not but manifestly tend to convince the World of the Being and Nature of the Supreme God, they could not but tend to restore the Law of Nature to its just Authority, and present the corrupt and degenerous World with a natural, that

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is, lovely Idea of Vertue; and give them a juſt Senſe of the Obligation they lay under, and of the Sanctions by which God eſtabliſhed that Law which he writ in the Minds of Men. Who ſees not now, that God by raiſing up ſuch Men, and by aſſiſting them with a Spirit of Wiſdom and a Spirit of Courage, which the Conſtancy of a great many of them in ſuffering for theſe Truths, and the Luſtre and Beauty of their Writings in thoſe dark Times do abundantly teſtify, was an undoubted Proof of God's Goodneſs to the Gentiles, and of his Concern for their true Intereſt and Happineſs? Why ſhould not this Light which God lent the then wandring benighted part of Mankind, be as kindly interpreted by Man as it was deſigned by God? Why ſhould not the Philoſophers of the Gentiles be looked upon as Prieſts and Prophets, well enough ſuted to the Oeconomy of the Law of Nature? Very excellent Uſe have Chriſtians, even the moſt Learned and Pious, made of 'em; and ſurely they ought to have proved as much more beneficial to the World they lived in, as they were then more neceſſary.

I think I have by this time ſaid enough not only to extinguiſh in any Man all ſuperſtitious Fears, and unworthy Apprehenſi-

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ons of the Divine Majeſty, but alſo to enkindle in him a grateful Love of God, and chearful Hopes of true Happineſs, by eſtabliſhing this Perſwaſion upon unſhaken Foundations, That God is a good and gracious God, That he is always ready to further and aſſiſt every Man in his Endeavours after Happineſs. But now let not that Doctrine be perverted to the betraying of us into Sloth, which was deſign'd to inſpire the Mind with a freſh Vigour, to quicken and confirm us in an induſtrious Purſuit after our true Happineſs: for we muſt remember, that God is not only good and gracious, but alſo,

Sect. 2. *Holineſs of God.*

Holy too: I ſhall not inſiſt long on this Point, becauſe I think 'tis already proved; Holineſs being as neceſſarily imply'd in Perfection, as Love or Goodneſs. I know ſome have talked, as if God were a mere Arbitrary Being, as if his Laws were not the Image or Expreſſion of his Nature, but merely the poſitive Precepts of an Arbitrary Will. If any Man can be ſo ſenſeleſs, as to believe that the moſt perfect Being can love or hate without any Reaſon for't; or that all the Laws and Actions of God ſhall be conſonant to the ſtricteſt Rules of Juſtice and Goodneſs, and all this by chance, for mere

mere Arbitrary Motion is blind and unguided; ſuch a one ſeems to me as uncapable as he is unworthy of Inſtruction: I can as ſoon believe Lightning and Thunder, Wind and Storm a God, as believe him to be a mere Arbitrary Being. The Heathens believ'd a God, *Proteus*, that could turn himſelf into all Shapes; but theſe Men believe what is infinitely more abſurd, a God, not of various and uncertain Shapes only, but alſo of an unfix'd, uncertain, indetermin'd Nature: for the Will muſt always be agreeable and conſonant to the Nature of that Being whoſe Will it is. Thus Liberty and Indetermination of Will in Man proceeds from ſome Contrariety in the Principles which conſtitute him; unſteady Judgment produces unſteady Will, and brutiſh Nature brutiſh Will or Inclination. If we conſult the Scriptures, nothing is more evident than the Sanctity of the Divine Nature, we are there exhorted *to walk in the Light, becauſe God is Light*; and *to be holy, becauſe he is holy*; which Holineſs doth not regard the Declaration of his Will, but his Nature; this being given as a Motive to oblige us to walk according to his righteous Precepts, becauſe this alone is that which can pleaſe a righteous God, this alone is that which can make us like

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and dear to him. From this Attribute of God, that is, Holiness, we may plainly infer,

First, That we are not to expect any Assistance from him but then, when that which we enterprize is just and lawful, and we our selves are not wanting to our selves; for 'tis inconsistent with the Holiness of God to make his Providence the Refuge of Laziness or Impiety. Ἀρετῆς γὰρ ἐλπὶς ὁ Θεὸς ἐστιν, οὐ δειλίας πρόφασις, God is the Hope of Vertue, not the Excuse of Sloth and Cowardice. 'Tis a rational and well-weighed Prayer which *Josephus* puts into the Mouth of *Moses* standing on the Shore of the Red Sea; inaccessible Rocks and Mountains deny'd the Israelites Passage one way, the numerous Host of the Egyptians had fill'd all others: before them was the Red Sea, whose Waves threatned as certain and more dreadful a Destruction than the Sword of the *Egyptians*; there was no Weapon for Fight, no Provision for a Camp, no Place for Flight. In this case *Moses* prays thus, οὐδ' αὐτὸς μὲν ἀγνοεῖς, &c. *Lord, thou knowest that no Contrivance, Industry, nor Force of ours can here avail us, 'tis in thee alone to find out a way to the Rescue of this People, who by thy Command and under thy Conduct have left* Egypt: *despairing of all*

Plutarch. de Superstitione.

all other ways, we fly to thee alone for Succour; Lord, let it come speedily, give us a clear Proof of thy Divine Omnipotence and Faithfulness; we are in great straits, great to us, but slight and inconsiderable to thee. The Sea is thine that stops our Progress, the Mountains that shut us up are thine; thou canst divide this Sea, or turn its Waves into firm Land, and make us find a safe Passage through the devouring Deep: or if thou thinkst fit, thou canst make us march in Triumph aloft through the open Sky. This was a Noble Faith, this was indeed an Expectation almost as wonderful as the Success it met with: But then, it was no less rational than successful, their Condition was capable of no Deliverance but a miraculous one, and it was their Obedience to the Divine Commands had reduced them to this Condition. This is a safe Rule to guide our Faith and Reliance by, in all our Distresses and Difficulties we must have recourse unto God, for these are the Times wherein Humane Infirmity requires the Support and Comfort of Divine Assistance; the utmost Strength and Perfection of Vertue is too weak to bear the shock and brunt of Calamity alone,

Max. Tyr. Dissert. 26. ἔνθα δεῖ αὐτῇ θεοῦ συλλήπτορος καὶ συναγωνιστοῦ καὶ παραστάτου, *it must be reinforc'd by Power from above.* But then these Difficulties must be such

ſuch to which our Vice has not betray'd us; and our own Courage and Induſtry muſt be as vigorous as our Prayers: for in vain do we beg new ſupplies of Strength, if we uſe not what we enjoy'd before. Divine Bounty doth never ſuperſede Man's Induſtry; fruitful Showers, and enlivening Rays do not prevent, but ſecond the Labours of the Husbandman: God obſerves the ſame Method in the Production of a nobler ſort of Fruit, Wiſdom and Vertue; the Soul, as well as the Field of the Sluggard, ſhall be o're-run with Weeds: there only ſhall the Divine Fruit of Philoſophy and Happineſs grow where religious Diſcipline tills the Ground, and wakeful Study ſows the Seeds of thriving Truths among the Furrows. Accordingly, if we conſider the Lives and Practice of excellent Men, none were ever ſo much Favorites of Heaven, that its Gifts grew up in 'em, like Corn and Wine in the Golden Age, without Culture or Dreſſing: Inſpiration it ſelf did not exempt Man from the neceſſity of Induſtry, but oblige him to a greater: Thus under the Old Teſtament a Prophetick Life was a Life of greater Strictneſs and Retirement than that of others; and in the New, not to mention the Watchings, the Faſtings, the Retirements, the Prayers

of our Lord and Master, that Account of himself which St. *Paul* gives us, will inform us, not only what his Life was, but what it was expected the Life of every one should be that shared with him in the Ministry and Dignity of an Apostle. *But in all things approving our selves as the Ministers of God, in much Patience, in Afflictions, in Necessities, in Distresses,——in Labours, in Watchings; by Pureness, by Knowledge.* 2 Cor. 6. Amongst the Heathens whatever Perfection and Excellency they attributed to humane Nature, whatever they attributed to an ἐυφυΐα, a Contexture and Frame of Nature more than common, whatever lastly they attributed to the Favour, the extraordinary Favour of God; yet did they always judg a strict Life and indefatigable Industry necessary to the acquiring of true Philosophy and Happiness: their *Pythagoras*, so dear to their Gods, that it seemed to be a doubt amongst them, whether he were not himself a God incarnate, not content to have been the Scholar first of *Pherecydes Syrus*, and afterwards of *Hermodamas*, travel'd first into *Egypt*, and afterwards to *Babylon*, and I know not whither, pursuing Wisdom and Happiness with great Industry, and as great Abstinence. *Socrates*, however inspir'd by his *Genius*, did yet learn

learn Musick of *Connus*, Poetry of *Evenus*, Agriculture of *Ischomachus*, Geometry of *Theodorus*, &c. And to all this he added the religious Discipline of Mortification even to a voluntary Poverty. What should I multiply Instances? there is not a Man amongst the Gentiles remarkable for Wisdom or Vertue, that is not as remarkable for that Travail and Self-denial by which he purchas'd both; I add Self-denial, Industry alone being not judg'd sufficient: for,

Secondly, 'Tis easy in the next place to infer from the Sanctity of God, that they who expect his Assistance should endeavour to be Good and Holy: 'tis Vertue that constitutes a Man a Subject of the Heavenly Kingdom, and a Favourite of God, and therefore 'tis this that gives him the best Claim to his Protection and Patronage: Vice is a State of Rebellion and Defiance against God, and he that has put off his Allegiance, cannot expect rationally the Benefits of that Government which he refuses to be under. 'Tis true, the Infinite Goodness and Clemency of God which is not easily vanquished by Man's Ingratitude, may pursue such a Man with

repeated Overtures and Tenders of Grace and Pardon, and may leave him in the possession of common Benefits, such as Health, Plenty, Friends, *&c.* but God will never confer upon him the most excellent Gifts, the Marks of his especial Presence and particular Favour; he will withdraw from him the Aids of his Spirit, and leave him to himself, a blind, indigent, and forlorn Creature: *The Holy*
Wisd. 1. *Spirit of Discipline will fly Deceit, and will not abide when Unrighteousness comes in.* Which is nothing more than what the Heathen by the Light of Nature did af-
Max. Tyr. Disser. 26. firm concerning his *Genius*, ἐὰν δὲ πᾶ μοχθηρὰν δείξῃς ψυχὴν, ἀνέστιος αὕτη καὶ ἀνεπιστάτητος, *Wicked Souls have no good Angels sojourning with them, or presiding over them.* Our Souls, like Temples, must be prepared and consecrated to him, if we would have God dwell in them: Righteousness and Holiness are the only things that charm and captivate God, nothing else can invite him to dwell with Man; this very Reason *Maximus Tyrius* assigns for the Residence and Abode of a *Damon* with *Socrates* after so extraordinary a manner. *Dost thou wonder that a Prophetick Spirit should dwell with* Socrates *so intimately*

mately united, so friendly, so inseparable, that he seemed only not mixt, and become one with his own Mind? with Socrates, *whose Purity of Body, Charity and Goodness of Soul, Strictness of Conversation, Depth of Judgment, Melody, and Perswasiveness of Speech, Religion towards God, and Integrity towards Man rendred him worthy of such a Guest, such a Friend?* From all which 'tis evident;

Θαυμάζεις εἰ Σωκράτει συνῆν Δαιμόνιον φίλον, μαντικὸν, ἀεὶ παρεπόμενον, καὶ μόνον οὐχὶ τῇ γνώμῃ αὐτοῦ ἀνακεκραμένον, ἀνδρὶ καθαρῷ μὲν τὸ σῶμα, ἀγαθῷ δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν, ἀκριβεῖ δὲ τὴν διαίτην, δεινῷ δὲ φρονεῖν, μουσικῷ δὲ εἰπεῖν εἰς δὲ τὸ θεῖον εὐσεβεῖ, ὁσίῳ δὲ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα. Idem ibid.

Thirdly, What different Rates we are to set upon the different Gifts of God: *Every good Gift, and every perfect Gift comes down from above:* but every Gift is not equally good, equally perfect, being neither equally necessary, nor profitable. Wealth, Power, Friends, Relations, Health, Strength, Beauty, Wit, Discretion, Vertue, are all good, but not all equal; their Value is different, and therefore the degrees of our Importunity, and of our Faith or Reliance upon God, must be proportion'd accordingly: a confident Faith, and an almost impatient Zeal doth well become us when we seek the Kingdom of James 1.

Heaven and the Righteouſneſs thereof, when we ſeek of God the Divine Gifts of Wiſdom and Vertue; but an humble Modeſty, and a moſt profound Submiſſion is the Ornament and Beauty of thoſe who are Petitioners for inferiour temporal Bleſſings: for God has promis'd the former to all that earneſtly ſue for them, peremptorily and without any tacit Reſervations; but his Promiſes of the latter do always imply this Condition, *If they ſhall be for our Good:* for the Perfections of the Mind are moral and immutable Beauties; but thoſe of the Body, and all the gaudy things of Fortune are like the fading Beauties of a Flower, the Heat ſcorches it, the Cold nips it, every little Chance cracks the Stalk, and the Hand of a Child will ſerve to crop it. Nothing therefore is more acceptable to God than the Modeſty of our Petitions for *theſe* good things, and the Fervency of them for the *other*; nothing more delightful to him, unleſs the granting of them: the things therefore that we are to beg of God, not only with the greateſt Importunity, but alſo in the firſt place, are thoſe which *Maximus Tyrius* thought the Subject of *Socrates* his Prayers; *What were theſe? A*

Max. Tyr. Diſſert. 30.

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vertuous Mind, a quiet State, an unblameable Life, and a chearful Death full of good Hopes. These were the Matter of his Requests, not Wealth or Honour, or Popularity. This at once brings to my thought another Objection rais'd against the possibility of attaining Happiness, and instructs me how to answer it.

Ἢ οἷοι τοῦτο εὔχετο ὁ Σωκράτης ὅπως αὐτῷ χρήματα γένοιτο, ἢ ὅπως ἀρξῇ Ἀθηναίων·—ἀλλ' εὔχετο μὲν τοῖς Θεοῖς·—ἀρετὴν ψυχῆς καὶ ἡσυχίαν βίου, καὶ ζωὴν ἄμεμπτον, καὶ εὐελπιν θάνατον.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Influence of Fortune on our Happineſs.

The Independance of our Happineſs on Fortune already cleared: And why, further conſidered. Fortune, what: How far its Sway extends. Fortune pretended neceſſary to remove the Impediments of Vertue. Every Man the Architect of his own Fortune. Fondneſs for the World ſprings from Infidelity and Senſuality, and the folly of both. Competency, what; and the uſe of it with reference to our Happineſs. The tendency of Wealth examined, with reference to the Mind, the Body, the outward State of Man. The Admiration of Wealth ariſes from falſe and gaudy Appearances.

A *Second* thing which Men charge with the Guilt of their Ruin, is Fortune. I might paſs over this Point ſlightly, becauſe Afflictions will come more properly to be conſidered in the Fourth Volume, where I treat of *Indolence*; and becauſe I have already clear'd two great Truths, which are of themſelves abundantly ſufficient to baffle and

and defeat this trifling Objection; namely, *Firſt*, That Vertue and Vice, Wiſdom and Folly, are the things to which, generally ſpeaking, we owe our Temporal Proſperity or Adverſity; and conſequently that thoſe, ſuppoſing the ordinary Aſſiſtance of God being in our power, theſe muſt be ſo too. *Secondly*, That we are aſſur'd of the Aſſiſtance of God, even in theſe things, as far as he ſhall ſee them truly ſubſervient to our Good. However, becauſe the perſwaſion of the Uſefulneſs, nay abſolute neceſſity of the Favour of Fortune, has taken ſuch deep root in the Minds of Men, that it would be thought little leſs than a Contradiction to imagine that a Man can be *Unfortunate and Happy*, (ſo that even *Seneca* himſelf has let fall one of the greateſt Paradoxes a *Stoic* was ever guilty of) ſuch an Expreſſion as this better becoming the Mouth of a Peaſant than a Philoſopher: *That not only Beginners, but Proficients in Vertue, till they have put off Mortality, will ſtand in need of ſome Indulgence of Fortune.* And few Men find any belief with the World, when they talk of the Contempt of Wealth, it being generally interpreted, either the Lazineſs of an unactive

Sed ei qui ad Virtutem tendit, etiamſi multum proceſſit, opus eſt tamen aliqua Fortunæ Indulgentia, adhuc inter humana luctanti, dum nodum illum exolvit, & omne vinculum Mortale. *Seneca de Vit. Beata.*

active and degenerous Mind, or the Dissimulation of one who affects to be thought to defy Fortune, while he doth secretly and inwardly repine and fret at the Neglect and Coldness she expresses towards him. I will therefore bestow a little time on the Consideration of this Objection.

Fortune, what. What dost thou mean by Fortune? If meer Chance, then to envy the Lot of others, or murmur at thine own, is Folly; if Providence, then 'tis Impiety: for whatever Goodness guided by unerring Wisdom doth, must be so well done that it cannot be mended; and whatever is meerly in the Power of a blind, giddy, and inconstant Humour, (which is the Notion by which Men chuse to express Fortune) can neither be prevented, fix'd nor regulated. But *How far its Sway extends.* what is it, *Secondly*, thou dost put in the Power of Fortune? the Understanding and Liberty of Mens Minds; Wisdom, Temperance, Industry, Courage, and in one word Vertue? If thou dost not, she has no Influence on thy Happiness, she cannot prevent thy Attainment of it, nor bereave thee of it when attained: If thou dost, thou dost enlarge the Empire of Fortune too too far; let her rule and insult over Souldiers, Courtiers, Lovers, factious Demagogues and Time-servers, but not over Philoso-

phers:

phers: Let thoſe who are her Minions, be her Slaves; let her diſpoſe of Money, Lands, Farms, Commiſſions, Benefices, Honours, Graces, Fame; nay, if you will, Crowns and Scepters too: Vertue and Happineſs, and Souls are too precious Commodities to be the Sport and Traffick of Fortune. *Solomon* obſerv'd long ago, *Wiſdom cries out, ſhe uttereth her Voice in the Streets; She cries in the chief Place of Concourſe, in the Openings of the Gates; in the City ſhe utters her Words.* Our Saviour in the great Day of the Feaſt cried, ſaying, *If any Man thirſt, let him come unto me and drink*; which is an Invitation of the ſame nature with that in the Prophet, *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no Money; come ye, buy and eat, buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without Price.* This ever was, and ever will be true; a great Fortune is not neceſſary for the Attainment of Faith, Hope, or Charity: And he that is endowed with theſe, can't be miſerable; you may learn the whole Syſtem of Divine and Important Truths, you may acquaint your ſelf with all the Beauty and Enjoyments of Vertue at a very cheap rate, and you may learn Temperance, Fortitude, Juſtice, Modeſty, Conſtancy, Patience, Contempt of the World, without

Prov. 1.

John 7.

Iſa. 55.

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out the Aſſiſtance of much more Wealth than will ſerve to feed and clothe you: And canſt thou not be content with theſe Poſſeſſions? Is not this a ſort of Merchandize to be preferr'd before that of fine Gold?

Fortune pretended neceſſary to remove the Impediments of Vertue.

I know the greater part of thoſe who accuſe their Fortune of their Miſery, do at leaſt pretend that their Condition and Circumſtances of Life are ſo incommodious, that they have not time to attend to the great Intereſt of the Soul, or at leaſt not with that Application which they ſhould. Alas, thus not the Mean only, but almoſt all talk, from the Porter to the Prince: the Circumſtances of one are too ſtrait, too narrow; of another too full of trouble, becauſe too full of State: One complains that he is withdrawn from his great End, by the many Allurements and ſenſual Temptations to which his Rank and Quality in the World expoſes him; another, that he is daily fretted and indiſpoſed by the little croſs Accidents, and the rugged Converſation which he is neceſſarily oblig'd to bear with: One complains of too much Buſineſs, another of too little; the hurry and multitude of things diſtracts the one, Infidel Fears and anxious Deſpondencies the other: One complains that his Acquain-

Acquaintances and Friends are too numerous, and intrench too far upon his precious Hours; another is querulous, melancholy, and peeviſh, becauſe he looks upon himſelf either for his meanneſs neglected, or for his misfortune deſerted and forſaken: Company is burdenſom to the one, and Solitude to the other. Thus all Conditions are full of Complaints, from him that trudges on his clouted Shoo, to him who can ſcarce mention the Manners or the Fortunes of the Multitude, without ſome Expreſſions of Contumely and Diſdain. Thou Fool, doſt thou not ſee that all theſe Complaints are idle and contradictious? for ſhame correct the Wantonneſs of thy Humour, and thou wilt ſoon correct thy Fortune; learn to be happy in every State, and every Place: learn to enjoy thy ſelf, to know and value the Wealth that is in thine own Power, I mean, Wiſdom and Goodneſs: Learn to aſſert the Sovereignty and Dignity of thy Soul. Methinks that if Philoſophy could not, Pride and Indignation might conquer Fortune: 'Tis beneath the Dignity of a Soul that has but a grain of Senſe, to make Chance, and Winds, and Waves, the Arbitrary Diſpoſers of his Happineſs; or what's worſe, to depend upon ſome Muſhroom Upſtart, which a chance Smile rais'd out of his

Turf

Turf and Rottenneſs, to a Condition to which his mean Soul is ſo unequal, that he himſelf fears and wonders at his own height. O how I hug the Memory of thoſe honeſt Heathens, who in a rugged Gown, and homely Cottage, bid defiance to Fortune, and laugh'd at thoſe Pains and Hazards, the Vanity and Pride of Men, not their Misfortune, drove them to! Men may call this Pride, or Spite in *them*; as the beggarly Rabble does uſually envy the Fortune which it doth deſpair of; but there were a great many of theſe who laid by envied Greatneſs, to enjoy this quiet, tho generally deſpicable Meanneſs: But let the Contempt of the World be what it will in a Heathen; let it be Pride or Peeviſhneſs, Vain-glory or any thing, rather than a Reproach to Chriſtians; what ſay you to the Followers of our Lord and Maſter? *Then ſaid* Peter, Acts 3. *Silver and Gold have I none*; None? what haſt thou then, thou poor Diſciple of a poor Maſter? a true Faith, a God-like Charity, and unſhaken Hope: Bleſſed art thou amongſt Men, nothing can make thee Greater, nothing Richer, nothing Happier but Heaven. You ſee plainly then, a Man may be vertuous, tho not wealthy, and that Fortune which prevents his being

ing Rich, cannot prevent his being Happy.

This Diſcourſe will never down; this is not calculated for this Age; Philoſophy muſt be a little more mannerly, and Religion a little more genteel and complaiſant than formerly, 'ere it can be adapted and accommodated to the preſent ſtate of things. Go on then, let's try how far it will be neceſſary to condeſcend; You cannot be happy, why? becauſe you are not *rich*; go then to God, and beg you may be *rich*; I have not the face to put up ſuch arrogant and intemperate Requeſts to God: 'tis plain then, 'tis not neceſſary to be *rich* in order to be happy; for whatever is neceſſary to this, thou mayſt with good aſſurance beg of God. But thy Deſires are more humble and modeſt, thou aim'ſt at nothing but what is very neceſſary, a fairer Houſe, another Servant, a Diſh or two of Meat more for thy Friends, a Coach for thy Convenience and Eaſe, and a few hundred Pounds apiece more for thy Children: O Heavenly Ingredients of a Rational Pleaſure! O Divine Inſtruments of Human Happineſs! O the humble and mortify'd Requeſts of modeſt Souls! Well, if theſe things be ſo neceſſary, and theſe Deſires be ſo decent and vertuous, if thou canſt not be happy, and conſe-

conſequently muſt be miſerable without them; put up a Bill, repreſent thy Condition in it, Such a one——wants a more commodious Houſe, more Servants, more Diſhes, *&c.* and deſires the Prayers of the Congregation for Support under this Affliction: you are profane; far be it from me, I would only let thee ſee the Wantonneſs of thy Deſires: if thou think'ſt this would expoſe thee to publick Laughter, go to thy Miniſter, unfold thy Caſe to him, let *him* pray for thee, he is a good Man, and his Prayers will go far: you rally and ridicule me. Enter then into thy Cloſet, ſhut thy Door, thou mayſt *truſt* God, he pities and conſiders even Human Infirmities; I could even almoſt *in my Mind* deſire it of him, but I am aſham'd to do it in a *ſet* and *ſolemn Prayer*; I could almoſt make the Petition in the *groſs*, but I bluſh to think of deſcending to *Particulars*. Well, then I ſee plainly that Wealth in any degree of it is ſo far from being neceſſary to our Happineſs, that it has ſo little of Uſefulneſs or Conveniency in it, that in thy Conſcience between God and thee, thou canſt not think it fit to complain of the want of it.

But

But this Answer will never satisfy him who complains of Want, or of being engaged in continual Troubles, and toss'd by the daily Changes and Revolutions of the World: I confess it, it will not; but I must tell such a one, if *Solomon*'s Observation be true, *The Hand of the Diligent maketh Rich*; and that other, *Seest thou a Man diligent in his business? he shall stand before Kings, he shall not stand before mean Men*; then his Poverty is his Crime as well as his Calamity, he must redeem himself from this his Punishment by Industry and Prayer. As to Calamities, this must be acknowledged, that the Mind of a good and great Man which stands firm upon its own Basis, a good God, a good Saviour, and a good Conscience, may remain unmov'd, when the Earth trembles, and the Sea roars round about him: Changes indeed befal things Temporal, but he leans not upon them. I may say farther, that he who upon mature Deliberation, and upon necessary Obligations of Duty engages himself in a just Cause, may be unfortunate, but he cannot be miserable; his Sufferings carry a secret Pleasure in 'em, and his Misfortunes are full of Hope and Glory, if he

Every Man the Architect of his own Fortune.

Prov. 10.

Prov. 22.

consider, if he reflect, if he do not feed on vain and airy Projects, and suffer himself to be unwarily transported by very irrational, tho seemingly just Passions. I must lastly add, That 'tis not the Necessity of their Affairs, nor the Iniquity of Times, which doth commonly involve and intangle Men in publick or private Calamities, but some secret Vanity, some blind impetuous Passion, some ill-laid Project, or some treacherous or dishonourable Fear. The State of *Rome* never felt more or greater Changes than in the Life of *Atticus*, as is obvious to any one who shall reflect upon the History of his Time; and yet in all the Turns and mighty Changes of Fortune, *Atticus* enjoy'd a constant Tranquillity and well-settled Peace, being scarce ever reduc'd as much as to the Necessity of a Retirement but once, as I remember: nor was it the meanness of his Quality, or the narrowness of his Fortune that secured him, he was a Man great in both; nor was it the secrecy of a private Life, or the sluggishness of a stupid Mind, which rendred him unworthy of any Man's Fear, and unable to provoke a Danger: No, he was a Man, as well for the Eminence of his Parts, and Vi-

gor of his Mind, as for the Largeneſs of his Fortune, well known to the greateſt and moſt active Men of all Parties; and yet ſteering his Life by the Rules of Vertue and true Wiſdom, he lived untouch'd by, unconcern'd in the ſtrange Alterations of ſo long a Life as his, which were ſuch and ſo many, that the Hiſtorian has obſerv'd, that they who were one day in the height of Power and Honour, were the next in the Gulph of Danger and Deſpair: ſo that his Remark is generally very true, *Sui cuique mores fingunt Fortunam.* *Every Man may faſhion and ſhape his Fortune as he will his Manners.* Nor was the ſucceſs of his Behaviour leſs in private than publick: For *Cornelius Nepos* has obſerv'd in his Life, That thoſe Friendſhips he entred into, he was very happy and conſtant in; nay, ſuch was the Gentleneſs, ſuch the Diſcretion of his Behaviour, that it preſerved him in the favour of an Uncle (I think) of his, who was ſo ſowre and peeviſh that none could pleaſe him, ſuch a *Nabal* a Man could not ſpeak to him; nay he not only kept in with him, but poſſeſſed him ſo entirely, that he was left his Heir. Nor was all this in *Atticus*, the Effect of Temper or Nature,

Corn. Nep. in Vita Attici.

Ibid. but of Vertue: *Neque id fecit natura ſolum, quanquam omnes ei paremus, ſed etiam Doctrina; nam & principum Philoſophorum ita percepta habuit præcepta, ut ea ad vitam agendam, non ad oſtentationem uteretur: For he had ſtudied Philoſophy not for Oſtentation, but the Conduct of his Life.* I might now preſume I had given ſatisfaction to this Objection, eſpecially ſince I oblige my ſelf to take the Caſe of Temporal and outward Calamities into full Conſideration hereafter. But the Infection is got into the Maſs of Blood, and has diffus'd it ſelf through Mankind, and 'tis not a ſlight and weak Medicine that can purge it out; therefore I have obſerved that the Heathen were never more copious, or more vehement than in the Refutation of this Error; our Baptiſm doth ſcarce proclaim a more ſolemn War againſt the Pomps and Vanities of the World, than Philoſophy did in all Ages: No doubt therefore the expugning this Fancy, which makes Man's Happineſs depend upon his Fortune in the World, muſt needs be a matter of great Importance, ſince both Revelation and Reaſon have ſo earneſtly and ſolemnly endeavour'd it; I ſhall not therefore, I hope, ſeem imper-

impertinent or tedious, if looking upon this Objection as conſiderable, in *Opinion*, tho not in *it ſelf*, I treat it with more Reſpect and Solemnity than it really deſerves.

My Deſign therefore is to examine what real Good or Convenience there is in Wealth, how valuable, or how neceſſary 'tis, and that not in a Declamatory or Sophiſtical, but ſuch a ſober and rational manner as may be ſatisfactory and convictive to every unprejudic'd Mind.

Firſt therefore, I will give ſome account, whence 'tis that Men are ſo intent upon their Worldly Intereſt, ſo wholly bent upon being Rich. 1.

Secondly, I will ſtate what is meant by a Competency, and what the Advantage and Neceſſity of it is. 2.

Thirdly, I will conſider what the natural Tendency of Wealth is. From all which it will eaſily appear, what Connection and Dependance there is between our Fortune and our Happineſs. 3.

If we enquire whence 'tis Men are ſo intent upon the World; one Reaſon is, 1. *Reaſon of Love of the World, Infidelity.*

is, a ſecret Infidelity. Men are deſirous to lay ſuch a Foundation as Time cannot wear, nor Winds and Tempeſts o'rethrow: they cannot truſt Providence, till they ſee, or at leaſt fancy themſelves in a Condition to defy it: and this they look upon as a great piece of Prudence, to provide for themſelves a ſafe Retreat at once from the Storms and Changes that generally purſue Mankind, and the Contempt which unjuſtly purſues *thoſe* who are overtaken by them: I cannot tell which is the greater, the Folly or the Impiety of this Humour; for 'tis a wretched Folly to flatter our ſelves with the vain hopes of a Security which is not to be found any where beneath Heaven; or to imagine that a great Eſtate is leſs liable to the blaſts of Fortune, than a ſmall one; or to fancy that the Contempt which attends thoſe who never riſe, is more inſupportable than that which attends thoſe who fall: Nor is the Impiety one jot leſs than the Folly; for what can be more wicked than amidſt ſo many viſible and undeniable Proofs and Aſſurances of a God, and Providence, to let the ſame anxious and jealous Fears fill and diſturb our Minds, which would ſcarce be pardonable,

nable, if there were neither? What greater Affront can we offer to the Goodneſs, the Wiſdom, the Omnipotence and Faithfulneſs of God, than to refuſe to repoſe the Care, the Truſt of providing for us upon him, when he not only offers, but preſſes himſelf upon the Imployment?

A *ſecond* Cauſe why we ſo eagerly purſue Wealth, is *Senſuality*: Being Strangers to the Peace and Joy of Faith, inſenſible of the Divine Delight of Charity, uncapable of the Extaſies, of the full Aſſurance of Hope, and in general of the Rational Pleaſure of a Philoſophical Mind; what can be expected but that both Wind and Tide ſhould drive us violently on another Shore? I mean the whole Force and Inclination of our Nature ſhould impetuouſly tend towards Senſual, Worldly Pleaſures and Enjoyments, and conſequently towards Wealth, as the neceſſary Inſtrument of both. You grant therefore that Wealth is neceſſary to a pleaſurable Life? To a pleaſurable one 'tis, to a pleaſant one 'tis not. The ſenſual Pleaſure of a ſenſual Man, *i. e.* one who is all Body and Fancy, requires a good Fund of Wealth, but the 2. *Senſuality.*

Temporal Enjoyments of a vertuous Man do not. I grant, that Eaſe and Reſt are neceſſary to the Sluggiſh, State and Height to the Proud, Variety to the Intemperate and the Wanton, and to all this Wealth is neceſſary; but I deny that Sloth or Pride, Intemperance (I will add Niceneſs) or Wantonneſs, is neceſſary to our Happineſs: nay, I will confidently affirm, that a vigorous Mind and active Body is a much greater Pleaſure than ſluggiſh Eaſe; that an humble, if contented, State is much more eaſy than proud Grandeur, and the ἀλαζονεία βίε, or *the Oſtentation of Life* in St. *John*; that ſober and thrifty Temperance is a far greater Pleaſure than Variety; and the Modeſty, Conſtancy and Friendſhip of a Vertuous Affection is not only a more calm, generous and ſteady, but a more tranſporting Satisfaction than the fanciful Rambles of a wandring Luſt. And I hope none will be ſo fond as to judg Wealth neceſſary to the obtaining theſe Vertues, if any are, their Silineſs and Vanity is to be exploded and laught at, not ſeriouſly confuted. For who in his Wits can believe, that Eaſe is the beſt Nurſe of Induſtry; that affected State and Ambitious Grandeur, are

are the Parents of Humility and Contentment; that Affluence and daily Delicacies are the moſt effectual Inſtruments of Abſtinence; and that Variety is the Mother of Chaſtity? If not, then 'tis apparent how far ſerviceable Wealth is, for all that lies in its power is to provide for us theſe Temptations. But tho a Wiſe and Vertuous Man wants no Wealth, I deny not but that he needs a Competency; what this is, is the next thing to be enquired: for this pretext of having what is enough, is frequently made uſe of to juſtify and legitimate Avarice and Ambition.

The meaſure of Competency is the Neceſſities of Nature, not the Extravagancies of Fancy: A little Heap, where frugal Temperance and humble Induſtry are the Stewards, is a plentiful Proviſion: But where-ever waſtful Luxury and wanton Fancy rule and govern, Plenty it ſelf is a meer Dearth. What Treaſures would not the Expenſive Riots of *Apicius*, *Orata*, *Clodius* exhauſt? how ſmall a Particle of which would have been ample Revenues to *Curius*, *Æmilius Paupus*, or *Fabricius*? Competency then is that Proviſion which the Vertuous Man needs Sect. 2. *Competency.*

needs as his *Viaticum*, as the Support of Life and Instrument of Vertue; the modest Wish of *Jacob*, Gen. 28. *Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on.* The Use and Advantage of this, is not to keep us or our Children from being exposed to Contempt (that is too slight an Evil for a Christian or Philosopher to dread) but to the barbarous Pity or Charity of rich and great Friends. A second Use or Advantage of it is, that it helps to keep the Mind erect and free; that it puts us into a Capacity of imploying our Reason, and enjoying our selves our own way; and leaves us not under any Temptation to unmanly Compliances, or Unchristian Jealousies and Fears: for he whose Ambition goes not beyond this, will easily trust Providence, if he believe there be any; or his own Industry, if he believe none: how he that divides and separates Providence and Industry will thrive in this matter, I know not; but he that joins his own Industry with God's Blessing obtain'd by Prayer, can never miss of this his Aim. Having proceeded thus far, I shall be most easily able to resolve,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, What the Value, what the Neceſſity of Riches is. 'Tis a pretty Speech which *Plato* in *Stobæus* makes in the Defence and Commendation of Wealth. But in the firſt place, I do not call every thing Wealth, that is not mere Beggary; I have allow'd of a Competency as very convenient even for a Vertuous and Wiſe Man. In the next place, I trouble not my ſelf about the Grandeur or Security of Kingdoms, tho peradventure the *Scythian Poverty*, or *Roman* Vertue is a ſtronger Bulwark, a better Guard of theſe than the Riches of *Aſia*. And in the laſt place, I do not enquire, what uſe Wiſdom and Vertue are able to make of Wealth, which can extract Pleaſure and Happineſs even out of Troubles and Afflictions, but what the natural tendency of Wealth is. Theſe things being obſerved, that and all other Diſcourſes of the like nature will appear to contain very little of ſolid Truth, and to have very little of weight in them: let us come to a trial of the Matter. If Contentment and Security were the natural Effects of Wealth, if to be Rich and to be Happy were the ſame thing, then it were not to be wondred at, that

The Tendency of Wealth, with reference to the Soul.

Serm. 89. ex Telete.

Wealth

Wealth ſhould be the great Idol and Ambition of Mankind: but if it neither free Men from thoſe Paſſions of the Mind, nor thoſe Diſeaſes of the Body, nor other Calamities which imbitter Life to the inferiour part of Mankind; what then is the Advantage of it? Let us then ſtand ſtill and conſider this; Do not Hatred and Anger, Envy and Anxiety, Ambition and Luſt reign more frequently and more inſolently in the Boſom of the Great and Wealthy, than of the labouring Cottager? Nay, I believe upon a narrow ſearch we ſhall find that ſome Paſſions are the Prerogative of a proud and inſolent Fortune, and are not incident to a mean one, ſuch as haughty Anger, irreconcilable Hatred, an unlimited Ambition, and an uneaſy Wantonneſs: the Plowman and the Artiſt, the Labourer and the Hind know none of theſe; Ambition does not break their Sleep, nor a faſtidious Niceneſs make 'em diſguſt and nauſeate their beſt Meals; nor are they troubled with wild and ungovernable Luſts, bred by Exceſs, and nurs'd by gaudy Bravery, deluding Arts, and more deluding Fancy,

Nor

Nor are the Rich more exempt from the Diſeaſes of the Body than from the Paſſions of the Mind; exceſſive Meals, diſorderly Sleeps, much Sloth and much Wantonneſs, as they are the Privileges of a gay Fortune, ſo are they the Sources of innumerable Diſeaſes: Scurvies, Gouts, Rheumatiſms, Surfeits, putrid Fevers, and I know not what are the Conſequences of proud Idleneſs, and exceſſive Enjoyments, *i. e.* of ill-govern'd Wealth; whereas a plain Table and a ſober Life, regular and cheap Pleaſures, and moderate Labour beget and improve an entire Habit of Health, and prolong Life to the utmoſt Period of Nature. This is a ſecond great Advantage of Wealth, that it gives us a diſeaſed Body, and a ſhort Life. *With reference to the Body.*

Sure then, the Rich are the Minions of Fortune, and the Diſaſters which oppreſs the reſt of Mankind touch not them: On the quite contrary, all Annals are ſtuffed with the Calamities and Misfortunes of theſe Men; rifled Wealth, defeated Hopes, baffled Ambition, blaſted Honours, broken dejected Power, and, in a word, mighty Changes are the Argument of Tragedies, and the Subject of a loud and raving Paſſion: whereas *With reference to Man's outward State.*

the

the Strokes of Fortune are soft and gentle, when they light upon the mean, these are not capable of Tragical Alterations: their Minds are of a stronger Temper, their Bodies firmer, their Senses not nice and delicate, and their little Sufferings draw not after 'em the mournful Pomp and State which attends the Fall, I may call it the Funeral of a great one. Here Envy insults not, Malice traduces not, the petulant Multitude do not follow the Corps with confus'd Clamours and Censures: Nor do Acquaintance flock to express outwardly a cold and formal Regard, while they feel inwardly a secret Joy, for that Man's Fall is always unpitied whose Power was a barren and useless Title. But to come closer yet, what is it that makes up the Comfort of humane Life? A quiet State, faithful Friends, good Wives and good Children? If we consider it, we shall find the Life of Man little beholden to Wealth in these Points: In all Changes of Time are not the Rich the greatest Sufferers? the Mark of Envy, the Prey of Violence and Usurpation? Have they not more Enemies as well as more Friends than other Men? Friends did I say? they have none. They have

De-

Dependents, Flatterers, Companions and Miniſters of their Pleaſures, no Friends. Hence is it, that nothing is more common than for thoſe above us to wiſh for the Content, the Eaſe and Enjoyment of thoſe below 'em: for the truth of it is, (if we proceed) Relations which are the Pleaſure of Men of middle Fortune, are the Burden and Incumbrance of the Rich and Great: for in all their Contracts and Diſpoſals they are Servants to their Fortune, not their Inclination. Marriages amongſt theſe are the Matches of Eſtates not Minds; and therefore they attend not the Temper or the Honour of the Families they link with; nay, what is worſe, they have no regard to their Education, or Vertue, or Wiſdom: But Money weighs all down, whatever Objections are put in the oppoſite Scale; in the whole Method of their Lives they are Slaves to their Fortune, and to their Reputation in the World, judging themſelves obliged to live not according to their Reaſon, but their Quality and the Humour, that is, the Folly of the Age, and of the Acquaintance they converſe with. Nor dare they walk by any other Maxims in the Government of the neareſt to them,

them, or in the Education of their Children; in all these things they must do what becomes Men of their Figure in the World, not what becomes true Wisdom. Who sees not now that upon the whole, there is in this State or Condition of Life more Incumbrance and less true Freedom? more of Shew, and less of Enjoyment than in any other?

The Admiration of Wealth, whence.

If all this be true, you'll be apt to conclude Mankind is mad; if Wealth neither makes us more wise, nor more healthy, more free in our selves, nor more fortunate in our Relations, what bewitches Men into this extravagant Dotage? What makes the World gaze upon and envy the Rich, as the only happy Creatures? What makes us fawn upon 'em and flatter 'em, as the only powerful and great things the World has? Something there is in it, and that's this, we see the Outside, the Pomp and Pageantry of Wealth; we see the gilt Coaches, the rich Liveries, the little Town of Buildings, gay Furniture, and a whole Squadron of Dishes; and together with all this, the gaudy Trappings the happy Man's delight with; the Port, the Grace, the Confidence that all this gives to Ignorance and Non-

Nonsense. But if you'll consider this truly, you will find all this mere Pageantry and Apparition, nothing solid nor reall in it. As for gay Clothing, 'tis an Advantage not worth the speaking to, 'tis the Pride of Children and the weakest of Women; the little Soul that converses no higher than the Looking-glass and a Phantastick Dress, may help to make up the shew of the World, but must not be reckon'd among the rational Inhabitants of it; serving only as Painture, Images, and Ornaments to the Stage, not Actors on it: as to all the rest, they *seem* to enjoy some Preheminence, but do not; the mean Man eats his Morsel with more Pleasure, because more Appetite; and sleeps with more Delight, because with more Ease, neither oppress'd in Body by Luxury, nor in Mind by Care: *The Sleep of a labouring Man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the Rich will not suffer him to sleep.* Eccles. 5. 12. All the rest, as numerous Attendants, many Dependents, Flocks of Parasites, and the like, are but mere Incumbrance, the Unwieldiness of a gross and heavy Body: all these serve to increase the Noise and Hurry, the Care and the Pomp, but

not the Pleasure or Enjoyment of the Wealthy. Hence was that Observation of *Solomon*, *If Riches increase, they are increas'd that eat them; and what Profit has the Owner thereof, saving the beholding of it with his Eyes?* A most extraordinary Happiness, this, to be the Host of the Neighbourhood, to have ones House the Rendezvous of the Idle and the Gluttonous, of Buffoons and Flatterers; and yet if the Rich live otherwise, presently they grow infamous and stink, they are look'd upon as *Indian* Graves, where Wealth is not laid up, but lost and buried; they are loaded with the Curses of some, with the Hatred of others, and with the Censures of all; and this is almost as bad as to be pester'd with Impertinencies and Flattery. This is the whole of the Matter, if People gaze and admire, 'tis their Ignorance; if they fawn or flatter, 'tis their Baseness; but still remember, 'tis the People, 'tis the Croud that doth this. Should a Man of Letters or of Spirit be over-awed by the Laws of Custom or some unhappy Necessity into the commission of this Idolatry, he could not but despise the Idol he bow'd down to, and see it a mere Lump of Wood or Stone,

Ibid.

The Admiration of Wealth whence.

not-

notwithſtanding its gaudy Dreſſes; tho I acknowledg I comprehend not what can reduce a Philoſopher to this piece of ſhameful Diſſimulation; the Soul that is great in it ſelf is ſo in deſpight of Fortune: he that can live vertuouſly, can live happily in the loweſt State: he that deſires but little, has no need of much: he that can deſpiſe Riches can deſpiſe the Inſolence and Pride of the Rich: In one word, he that can command himſelf, needs be a Slave to none.

After all, I think it were poſſible to evince the Miſchievouſneſs of Wealth as plainly as I have its Uſeleſsneſs; but that were to preſs the Point further than my preſent Deſign requires: for my Buſineſs was to ſhew, either that Fortune was not neceſſary to our Happineſs, or as far as it is, that 'tis in our own Power; both which I may now preſume my ſelf to have ſufficiently perform'd. I will therefore paſs on to the Objection from Fate.

CHAP. V.

Of FATE.

The Notion of Fate *stated. Man's Fondness.* Fate *from spiritual Pride and Looseness.* Fate *impugned,* 1. *By Authority. Various Opinions about it and its Causes. The Extent of its Empire. The Mind exempt. The true Difference between the Pythagorean and Stoick* Fate——*Different Opinions about the Necessity implied in* Fate——*Christian* Fate *worse than Pagan.* 2. *By Reason and Revelation.* Fate *cannot derive it self from Matter, nor from God. 'Tis repugnant to Sense and Experience. The Consequences of* Fate. *Scripture clear'd from countenancing* Fate. *Demonstrated from the Nature of God, his declar'd Will and Government.*

The Notion of Fate stated.

AMongst the many Shifts and Devices Men have invented to quiet Conscience, and at once to excuse and enjoy their Lusts, this is none of the least, that they impute all to Fate, not only the Events that befal them, but even

even their Crimes and Follies, as *Juvenal* did the Dissoluteness of *Peribomius*; that is, they believe, or would be thought to do so, that all our Affections and Actions, and all Events that befal us, are fatal and inevitable; that no Prudence can prevent, no Industry frustrate the Decrees of Fate, against which we struggle but in vain. This is the popular and general Notion of Fate taught first by *Democritus*, *Empedocles*, *Heraclitus* and *Leucippus*, and so derived down from Age to Age, and prevailing mostly amongst the Multitude. Thus *Bacchylides* in *Stobaeus* his *Eclogue* expresses the popular Notion of Fate: *'Tis not in Man to choose his State, whether wealthy Peace or inexorable War, or all-confounding Sedition; but Fate, the Sovereign Arbiter of each, leads us on blind and hood-wink'd to our Ruine.* And *Euripides* expresses the other part of the Opinion containing the Adamantine Chain, the insuperable Necessity of Fate, thus, μορσίμα δ' οὔτε φυγὲν θέμις, οὔτε σοφία τ' ἀπώσεται, ἀλλὰ μάτην πρόθυμος ἀεὶ πόνον ἔχει. *'Tis not permitted us to shun our Destiny, nor can any Humane Prudence*

Θνητοῖς οὐκ αὐθαίρετοι οὔτ' ὄλβον τ' οὔτ' ἀκαμπτὸς Ἄρης, οὔτε πανφέρεις στάσις ἀλλ' ἐπιχειμπτεῖ τέρας ἄλλοτε ἐπ' ἄλλαν γᾶν ἁ πάνδωρος δῶσα. Stob. Ec. Phys. c. 9.

ward its Bloom, nor can any thing but endless and fruitless Troubles attend our Contention with it.

'Tis a sign of a desperate Cause or desperate Impudence, to dispute against our common Sense, and to defy the daily Experience of Mankind; and yet all this the Abetters of an universal Fate (such as this is) are guilty of: for they deny that Liberty in Man which all Laws Divine and Humane, all Exhortations and Advices, all Commendation and Reproof, *i. e.* plainly God and Man do suppose; for if the Mind of Man were o're-ruled, if his present and future State were fix'd and determin'd by a fatal and inexorable Necessity; then as Laws, Advice and Exhortation would be useless and impertinent, so all Reproof and Punishment would be unjust, and all Praise and Reward undeserved: and yet tho the Assertion of Fate be oppress'd and o're-born by all these Absurdities, it wants not at this day its Maintainers and Sticklers; for there are who maintain a Necessity in humane Affairs and Events deriv'd from the Influence of Heavenly Bodies: which Notion of Fate take in the Words of *Manilius*;

Fata

Fata regunt Orbem, certa stant omnia Lege.
Longa per certos signantur tempora Cursus.
Nascentes morimur, finisq; ab origine pendet.

Manilius Astronomi. con. 4.

Fates rule the World, fix'd Laws do all things guide,
And long Times through their certain Channels slide,
Death of the Birth, of the Beginning th' End,
And all th' Events of Humane Life depend.

And there are others, who tho they condemn Judicial Astrology in set Treatises writ against it, do yet maintain such Eternal Decrees as imply a more inflexible Fate than any Pagan but *Democritus* and those just now mention'd with him, did ever hold: Nay, a Fate more impious than that of *Democritus*, for what he imputed to senseless Matter, these do to God; and as much more rigid as it is more impious than his, for he never thought of another Life wherein Eternal Misery should punish those Actions that were unavoidable in this.

Man's fondness for Fate, whence.

Now the Reason why this Doctrine of Fate, this absurd and baffled Doctrine is so greedily embrac'd and eagerly defended by many, is very plain; it feeds the Vanity and Curiosity of some, and the Pride of others; 'tis a luscious Pleasure to curious and vain Minds, to fancy themselves Masters of the starry *Cabala*, able to spell out and interpret the Laws of Fate, and pry into the Destinies of future Ages, which are cover'd with thick Clouds and impenetrable Darkness to all but them alone: 'Tis a delicious Pleasure, no doubt of it, to the Proud and Haughty, and Ill-natur'd, to see themselves caress'd and exalted by God as his particular Favourites, while the miserable Multitude, the rest of Mankind, are excluded from the Capacity, and, much more, the Hopes of Happiness and Heaven; and in general 'tis an acceptable Opinion to the Loose and Profligate, since 'tis a ready Apology for Idleness and Lust, and all manner of Sins; for Men might sin confidently and without remorse, if they did sin fatally, or rather nothing could be branded with the Infamy of Sin and Shame, when whatever Men did, were

the

the Effect, the unavoidable Effect of Nature and Necessity, an Act of Obedience to those Fatal Laws which they cou'd not transgress. *Tertullian* therefore speaks very properly when he saith, *Mentis malæ impetus vel Fato vel Astris imputant, nolunt suum esse quod malum agnoscunt. They impute the Heat and Sallies of their Lust to Stars and Fate, being unwilling to charge themselves with the Guilt of that which they own to be Evil.* This is the Use *Cerialis* makes of this Doctrine of Fate in *Tacitus*; the Roman Legions had behav'd themselves very unworthy of that Name and Reputation they possess'd, and were extreamly dejected under the Conscience of it; therefore he to chear and encourage 'em, and to wipe off the Stain and Dishonour of their Misbehaviour, imputed to Fate that which ought with Truth to have been imputed to the Dissension of their Leaders and themselves, and to the Fraud and Cunning of their Enemies. From this little that has been said, 'tis apparent why proud and vicious Men contend for Fate; so does likewise of what impor-

Donec *Cerealis* mulceret animos, Fato acta dictitans quæ militum Ducumq; Discordia, vel fraude Hostium evenissent. *Tacit. l.* 4. *Hist.*

tance

tance it is, to free Mens Minds from a Perſwaſion ſo pernicious to the Intereſt of Vertue, the Peace of the Publick, the Happineſs of Man, and the Honour of God.

To which purpoſe, that I may contribute all I can, I'll conſider,

First, On which ſide ſtands the Advantage of Authority, whether for or againſt Fate.

Secondly, What plain Reaſon, and as plain Revelation do dictate in this Point.

Variety of Opinions concerning Fate and its Cauſe.

As to the firſt, I will not pretend to make a juſt and intelligible Collection of the different Notions which have been taken up of Fate; 'tis evident from that which *Grotius* has done of this kind, not only how tedious and voluminous, but alſo how obſcure and confus'd the Diſcourſes of Men have been on this Subject: I ſhall only therefore, as far as my Memory will ſerve me, conſider their Opinions in ſuch a manner as the Nature of this preſent Enquiry ſhall oblige

oblige me. Most Philosophers do agree in one general Notion of Fate, that it is a Connection or Series of Causes successively depending upon one another, and producing a necessary Effect or Event, εἰρμὸς αἰτιῶν ἀπαράβατος; But their Opinions concerning the first Ground or Original of this necessary Connection or Dependence were very various, some ascribing it to *Dæmons* or Spirits, some to the Influence of *Stars*, some to the Circumagion or whirling about of the Heavens, some to an Universal Soul, some to the Force of Motion, some to the Contexture and Contrivance of Nature, others to Atoms, and others to God: And indeed since *Matter* or *Mind* are the two only things into which all Philosophers have ultimately resolved their Search and Enquiries after the Original of all things, they ought to have look'd for no other Original of Fate than one of these two. But this concerns my present Question but very little; for if Man be over-ruled and determined by fatal Laws, it matters little how he came to be so: Nor did I mention this Variety of Opinions for any other Reason than this, that it gives us just occasion to

Nemesius.

suspect

suspect Faith it self as an erroneous and ill-grounded Position; for obscurity, and intricacy, and multiplicity of different Notions about the same thing, are the general Marks of Falshood and Error.

But there are two things very material to be enquired.

First, How far the Empire or Dominion of Fate was generally extended.

And, *Secondly*, what kind of Necessity, or what Degrees of it were generally supposed to constitute Fate.

1. *The Extent of its Empire.*

As to the Extent of its Power, this one thing is very remarkable, That the Heathens did exempt the *Mind* of Man from its Sovereignty. *Democritus* indeed believed the Soul of Man as *necessarily* and *fatally* moved by the Impression of his Atoms as any other Natural or Irrational Body. But *Epicurus* deserted him in this, and following the Conduct of common Sense and Experience, acknow-

knowledged the Liberty of the Soul of Man, and laboured (as *Plutarch* tells us) with all his Might to assert it, and to preserve the Distinction of Vertue and Vice, which Fate destroys: To serve this *Hypothesis* it was, that he invented that new Motion of his Atoms, called by *Lucretius Clinamen*, sufficiently expos'd by *Tully*, and how well defended by *Gassendus*, I am not concerned to examine; for I have produced his Opinion only as an Instance of the clearness of this Truth, That the Soul of Man is not subject to Fate; for had not its *Liberty* been undeniable and self-evident, the Principles of *Epicurus* his Philosophy had certainly obliged him to follow *Democritus* in this, as in all other Points, and to have believed the Soul it self o're-rul'd by Fate. The Poets indeed made the Monarchy of Fate so Universal, that they believed the Gods themselves subject to it. Thus *Jupiter* in *Homer* bemoans the Fate of his *Sarpedon*, which he could not prevent. And thus another Poet represents *Apollo* striving in vain, by all the Power of Art, and Vertue of Herbs, to restore Life to his *Hyacinthus*. Nor was this only a Poetick Fancy, 'tis

usual

usual with *Plato* to extend the Dominion of Fate over the Gods themselves: but this was no wonder, for Fate with him imports the immutable Laws of the Supreme God, and Gods those Spirits that were created by him. The *Stoicks* indeed (at least some of them) assigned a worse Reason for this Sovereignty of Fate; namely, That the Supreme Architect could not correct the Defects and Incapacities of *Matter*. After all this, 'tis no wonder that St. *Austin* should take this to be the general Notion of Fatal Events, that they were such as proceeded from the Necessity of I know not what Order, maugre God and Man. But all this while, it must be remembred that this Dominion of Fate, tho it limited the Power, did not over-awe or necessitate the *Will* of their Gods. And no wonder, for I never find, as I remarked before, that any but *Democritus* and his Tribe did extend the Dominion of Fate over the Soul of Man. *Hierocles* makes the *Pythagorean* Fate nothing else but the execution of that immutable Divine Decree, That the *Vertuous* should be rewarded, and the *Vicious* punished; and at the same time doth utterly deny

De Civ. Dei, l. 5. c. 1.

that

that Man is any way necessitated or over-ruled in his Choice or Actions. *Alcinous*, representing the Platonick Fate, determines indeed the Events of things fatal; but at the same time he leaves the Minds of Men possessed of their just and natural Liberty. And whatever unavoidable Connection of Causes the *Stoick* talked of, no one did more exalt and magnify the Liberty and Power of the Mind of Man: So that *Nemesius* might very well in general affirm, That the wisest of the *Greeks* believed Mens Minds free, and the Events of their Actions Fatal, whether he had respect to the former or the latter; for thus far the *Pythagorean*, *Platonick*, and *Stoick* agreed, That the Mind of Man was free, that Events were fatal. Now 'tis not to be wondred at, that they who did not judg the calamitous or prosperous Issues of outward things to deserve the Name of Good or Evil, should place such Events wholly out of our own Power, and deem 'em no way dependent upon our Behaviour; 'Tis enough that they left Man's true Happiness, *i. e.* Wisdom and Vertue in his

De Decret. Platonicis, c. 19.

* Οἱ δὲ λέγοντες τὴν αἵρεσιν τῶν πρακτῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν εἶναι. Τὴν δὲ τῶν αἱρεθέντων ἀπόβασιν ἐπὶ τῷ εἱμαρμένῃ, εἴσι δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων σοφώτατοι. Nemes. c. 37.

his own Power, which they always did.

Marcus Anton. l. 2.

Ἀλλὰ καὶ εἶσι (scil. θεοὶ) καὶ μέλει αὐτοῖς τῶν ἀνθρωπείων; καὶ τοῖς μὲν κατ' ἀλήθειαν κακοῖς, ἵνα μὴ περιπίπτῃ ὁ Ἄνθρωπος, ἐπ' αὐτῷ τὸ πᾶν ἔθεντο. And it deserves here to be remembred, that they confin'd this Fatality of Events to this Life; for such of them as did believe the Eternal Duration or Immortality of the Soul, did also believe that its Misery or Happiness in that State, did depend on its Behaviour in this. But how came the *Platonicks* and *Pythagoreans*, who set that Value upon Temporal things which they deserved, to agree thus far with the *Stoicks* in asserting the Fatality of Events? Or how came the Storm and Fury of all Writers to light so heavily only upon the *Stoicks* Fate, if these taught the same thing with *Pythagoras* and *Plato*? They did indeed all of 'em acknowledg Events fatal, and yet they differ'd widely in their Notion of this Fatality:

For, *First*, the *Stoick* Fate depended partly upon *Matter*, partly upon *God*; whereas the *Platonick* Fate depended wholly upon the Will of a Wise, Powerful, and good God.

Secondly,

Secondly, The *Pythagorean* and *Platonick* did believe Good and Evil to be diſpenſed by a Divine and immutable Law, but ſo, that the one ſhould be the Reward of Vertue, and the other the Puniſhment of Vice: So that Fate with them was nothing elſe but the Execution of that Decree of God in the Prophet, *Say ye to the Righteous it ſhall be well with him; for they ſhall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the* Iſaiah 3. *Wicked, it ſhall be ill with him; for the Reward of his hands ſhall be given him.* But the *Stoicks* in their Aſſertion of the Fatality of Events had no ſuch Regard to the Vertue or Vice of Man; nor did they ſettle or ſuppoſe any ſuch Neceſſary Connexion or Dependence between Vice and Vertue of Man on the one hand, and Puniſhment and Reward on the other.

Thirdly, tho the *Platonicks* taught that all things were comprehended within the Compaſs of Fate, that is the general and immutable Laws of the Supreme Being, yet did they not believe that all particulars were decreed and determin'd; whereas the *Stoicks* (if we follow the Common Opinion) did not exempt any particular Event from the Over-ruling Neceſſity of Fate.

Quicquid patitur mortale genus,
Quicquid facimus venit ex alto;

Whatever ill unhappy Man sustains,
Whate're he doth, 'tis what his Fate ordains.

And *lastly*, The necessity of the *Stoick* Fate was Rigid and Inflexible, but that of the *Platonick* was not, or at least not in all Cases. And this puts me in Mind of the

The necessity in Fate of what sort.

Second thing Considerable in the Notion of Fate, *i. e.* what kind of Necessity or what degrees of it are supposed to render an Event Fatal: The *Stoicks* did indeed think that the Necessity of Fate was uncontroulable, irresistible, inevitable; tho I cannot deny but that the Opinion of *Chrysippus* and *Seneca* too (as he explains it somewhere in his Natural Questions) concerning Fate, if placed in an advantageous Light would look with a more pleasing and favourable Aspect upon the Liberty of Man; but let the *Stoicks* think what they will, I do not find that others thought such a Necessity as this alone, and nothing less sufficient to make up Fate;

or

or o're-ruling Influence of the Stars, did yet believe that the Evil they threatned might be diverted by Prayers, Sacrifices and other Religious Rites, according to that of *Nemesius*, *There are no Influences, no Aspects of Stars so froward and malignant, so fatal and irresistible, but that Prayers and Expiations may sweeten and mitigate them, or else prevail with those Powers which govern them to divert their Menaces.* Besides this, the Distinction of Fate into Denunciative and Peremptory or Conditional, was very well known to the Heathens; this Last was a Fate whose Necessity depended upon some Antecedent Conditions, upon some Suppositions which might or might not be fulfilled: This, *Servius* discourses largely of upon that place of *Virgil*:

Πρὸς δὲ τοὺς σόφους τῶν Αἰγυπτίων λέγοντας ἀληθεύεσθαι μὲν τὴν διὰ τῶν ἀστρῶν εἱμαρμένην, τρέπεσθαι δὲ αὐτὴν εὐχαῖς καὶ ἀποτροπιασμοῖς, εἶναι γὰρ τινὰς καὶ τούτων αὐτῶν τῶν ἀστέρων θεραπείας τὰς ἐκμειλισσομένας αὐτοὺς, καὶ ἄλλας τινὰς ὑπερκειμένας δυνάμεις, τὰς τρέπειν αὐτοὺς δυναμένας, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὰς εὐχὰς καὶ τὰς θεραπείας τῶν Θεῶν καὶ τοὺς ἀποτροπιασμοὺς ἐπινενοέσθαι.

Nemes. p. 226.

Nam quia nec Fato, merita nec morte peribat,
Sed misera ante Diem——

Before her Day fell the Unhappy Maid
By Love, not Fate, nor her own Crimes betray'd:

Where he that pleaſes may ſee many Inſtances of this Conditional Fate; and to come to an End, the Neceſſity of Fate in the opinion of *Ariſtotle* and *Epicurus*, if *Gaſſendus* repreſents it rightly, was not an inflexible, uncontroulable one, but one ſubject to Alteration and Change, to Chance and many Impediments, being nothing elſe but that Energy or Efficacy in Natural Bodies, which the Wiſdom of Man did often prevent, the Induſtry and Courage of Man did often maſter, and Chance did often hinder and overrule. By all this we ſee plainly how careful the Heathens were, that the Neceſſity of Fate might not deſtroy the Liberty of Man, how earneſtly they contended for ſuch a Fatality of Events, as might not cancel Man's Obligation to Vertue, nor diſcourage him from the Expectation and Purſuit of Happineſs; for now to draw to a Point, and to make ſome uſe of this tedious Recital of the Pagan Notions of Fate: If we aſſert a *Stoical* Fate, we yet leave the Wiſe Man whatever Encouragements he can derive from

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the Rewards of another life, and whatever Satisfaction he can derive from Vertue it ſelf in this. And certainly tho temporal Events were Fatal without any Connexion to, or Dependence upon, the Choice and Actions of Man; yet even on this Suppoſition, Vertue were eligible, as that which teaches us to enjoy Proſperity, and bear bravely that Adverſity which we could not prevent: But if with other Philoſophers we did believe not only that the ſucceſs of another life, but even that of this too, did depend wholly upon our behaviour, and that Events were therefore only Fatal, becauſe thoſe Decrees of God which did award Happineſs to the Vertuous, and Miſery to the Wicked, are fix'd and immutable; then we could not deſire more powerful Encouragements to Vertue, or more Evident proof that it is in our own Power to be Happy. If we grant the Neceſſity that makes up Fate flexible and mutable, or if we ſuſpend a fatal Event upon Conditions, as it were but reaſonable to imagine that all Evil ones are ſuſpended: There will be no Reaſon to queſtion whether Man's Happineſs be in his own Power. If we make the Neceſſity of a denunciative Fate, which even Wiſdom and Vertue cannot

surmount, extend it self to some few things: And that Fate or Fortune, which drags only Fools and Sluggards in Chains after it, more general and universal, which is a Notion *Cælius Rhodiginus* seems to have taken from the *Platonicks*; we meet with nothing in all this which can rationally deter the Industry and Hopes of any Man. If lastly, with *Aristotle* and *Epicurus*, we attribute no more force or strength to Fate, than to that Efficacy of Natural Causes, which as we experience every day is not irresistible (for the Mind over-comes those Inclinations we derive from Natural Temper, and Life may be lengthen'd or shortned by Temperance or Luxury, it being a flame which is not of it self so inextinguishable, but that it requires our Care to cherish it, and barren Grounds may be improved and cultivated, *&c.*) then nothing is more Evident than that it behoves us to act like Men, since our Reason and Virtue have their Necessary tendency and efficacy as well as any other natural Causes: And since the Concurrence of our Endeavours may so much more properly be supposed Necessary to promote our Happiness than the Influence of Stars, as it has a more direct

Cæl. Rhodiginus, l. x. c. 20.

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rect and immediate operation upon our Affairs, than the Motion of those Heavenly Bodies can have.

And now, who would expect to find that Fate in the Christian which was banished the Pagan World? Who would expect that the Mind of Man should be fetter'd and bound by a more inexorable and deplorable Necessity now in this Age of *Light* and *Grace*, than ever it was in the thickest Darkness of Paganism? Who could now believe that Man's Eternal success, in another life, should be as fatal as ever the *Stoick* did believe his Temporal one in this? Or who could ever imagine that Christians would Charge that upon the Decrees of a Wise and Good God, which the Heathens out of their Honour for him, did ever refuse to do? For those of them who made Fate entirely the Decree of God, did believe that in the Dispensation of Evils God did wholly regard Men's Crimes and Sins, that there was no other Fate attended any Man than what he was himself the Author of. And they who did believe a Fatality of Events without any dependence upon the Behaviour of Man, did impute it to *Matter*, not to God, to the *Deficiency* of the one, not to the

Christian Fate worse than Pagan.

Will of the other. 'Tis true, ſuch a Fate is not to be found in the Scriptures, as we ſhall ſee anon; nor is it to be found in the Fathers of the Church, we may find *Juſtin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and St. *Auſtin* himſelf, (however accus'd by ſome as a Fataliſt) zealouſly Diſputing againſt the Pagan Fate: what would they have done, had there been then ſuch a Notion of Fate as has ſince prevail'd amongſt ſome Chriſtians, which is briefly this, That the Eternal Miſery of Nineteen Parts of the World, (I ſpeak modeſtly) and the Eternal Happineſs of the Twentieth, is Fatal; that the means conducing to theſe Ends are Fatal; the one being ſhut up under the invincible Neceſſity of *Natural Impotence*, and *Rejection from ſufficient Grace*: the other being called and acted by *Grace*, *Irreſiſtible*. That this Neceſſity of Fate is the Reſult of a Divine Decree, That this Decree proceeded from mere Arbitrary *Will*, without any regard to the Behaviour of Man, they that cried out againſt the Pagan Fate, that it ſubverted Humane Life, that it defeated all Laws, that it left Man no uſe of his Reaſon, that it left no place for rational Hopes or Fears, with what bitter Invectives

vectives muſt they needs have aſſaulted this Fate? The Pagan Fate left the *Will* free, this bound and fetter'd, not only bereaved of Natural Power and Liberty (for we contend not about that) but deſtitute of Grace and Divine Aſſiſtance? The Pagan Fate in the Opinion of a great many, if not moſt, did not teach a rigid and inflexible *Neceſſity*, this doth: They amongſt the Pagans who taught the Neceſſity of Fate inexorable, underſtood it of *Neceſſity* in Temporal Events, but this Fate extends it to eternal ones. The *Stoick* the great Aſſerter of Fate acknowledged, nay, eagerly contended, that Man might be Vertuous and Happy in deſpight of Fate, but theſe Men make humane Happineſs and Vertue the very Object of their Fate, making Sin and Miſery, Vertue and Happineſs, as Fatal as any Events whatever.

In vain now ſhall any one of 'em think to excuſe their Doctrine from the Imputation of Fate, by telling us (as * ſome do) that Fate in the Pagan Notion did involve God as well as Man within the Compaſs of it's Neceſſity: That what they teach, is nothing elſe but God's voluntary Decree: This is a miſerable ſhift, for this doth not at all lighten the weight of that Fatal

* *Calvin. brevis Reſponſio, &c. in Præf.*

Fatal *Neceſſity* that lies upon unhappy Man, to think that God is not ſubject to the ſame: Nay, on the quite contrary, the Pagan Notion was more eaſie to the Mind, and whil'ſt it freed God from the guilt of Man's Ruine, it frees Man from all hard and irreligious thoughts of God.

Mart. *Numina cum videas diris obnoxia Fatis,*
Invidia poſſis exonerare Deos.

Since Heavenly Powers to Curs'd Fate ſubject be,
The Gods you cannot but from Envy free.

It was pure Piety in the *Stoick*, to impute that Fatality of Event, which he thought independent of the good or ill behaviour of Man, to any thing rather than to God, what Impiety!——But I have done, I have ſufficiently conſidered which way the ſtream of Authority runs, and it evidently appears to be againſt all ſuch Notions of Fate, as put it out of a Man's Power to be Virtuous and Happy, and determine his Sin and Miſery wholly *Neceſſary* and unavoidable. I will now proceed to conſider,

Secondly,

Secondly, What plain Reaſon and as plain Revelation do dictate in this point. Thou doſt believe Fate, and therefore doſt deſpair of Happineſs: Thy ſenſe muſt be plainly this, All is in the Power of Fate, nothing in thine own, there is nothing in thee to do that can contribute to make thee Vertuous or Happy. Whence can this *Neceſſity*, this Fate proceed? there are but two Principles that were ever fancied to be the firſt Cauſes of all things, *God* and *Matter*. Doſt thou believe this Neceſſity proceeds from Matter, from the Motion of Atoms, or the Influence of Stars? This belief, as *St. Auſtin* argues, doth ſubvert the Foundation of all Religion, for he who believes that he depends upon Fate not God, can have no ſufficient Reaſon for the Worſhip of that God, on whom he hath no Dependance: But this is that peradventure thou wouldſt have; well, when thou art able to prove Reaſon and Underſtanding to drive themſelves from endleſs Atoms, when thou canſt find out any kind of Natural Motion of Matter or Atoms, which can be the Cauſe of Liberty or Freedom in the *Will*, any Motion that can at once be Neceſſary (for ſo all Motion of Atoms muſt, be it of what kind it will)

Reaſon and Revelation againſt Fate.

will) and yet free too, for ſuch all my Deliberations and all my Choices I make, prove the Motion of the Mind to be, then I will acknowledge a Fate, not only independent from, but if thou wilt, Superiour to God; then I will forbear all farther attempts of Charity, as vain, and leave thee to thy Fate and Miſery: But theſe are Notions ſo abſurd in themſelves, that no Similitudes, no Arguments, can make 'em appear one jot more ridiculous or irrational than they do to all Men of ſenſe at the firſt hearing. There are ſome Errors as well as Truths that are ſelf-evident, there needs no Demonſtration to convince us that the one are Errors, and the other Truths, and of this kind are the Errors we are ſpeaking of; if a Man ſhould aſſert that Death is the Original of Life, that ſenſeleſs *Matter* gives Being to an underſtanding Mind, that Neceſſity is the Parent of Liberty and ſuch like, it were an unpardonable weakneſs in any Man to think, that ſuch aſſertion did ſtand in need of a laborious Confutation. But there are who ſuppoſe God the Author of all things, and yet ſuppoſe Events fatal too, the former Opinion was ridiculous, this is impious; for ſuppoſe Mankind

kind fatally guided by the Influence of the Stars, and that these Stars have received this Power and Energy from God, is it not natural for every Man to break out into the words of St. *Austin*, *How outragiously do these Men reproach Heaven whilst they believe those Crimes and Villanies decreed by that August Senate and glorious Court in Heaven, which had any City upon Earth decreed, it had deserved to have been damned by the Common Vote, and raz'd to the ground by the united Arms of Mankind.* When I consider that the Stars are the Work of God, that their Order and Motion was prescrib'd by him, that whatever Vigour and Efficacy they have, they have received it from him: And then Remember that God is a most infinitely kind and good Being; I should easily suffer my self to be perswaded that they could shed no influence upon this lower World, but what were extreamly beneficial to it, that they could have no Aspects but what were favourable and benign: I could easily believe that all the

Illi vero qui positionem Stellarum quodammodò decernentium qualis quisque sit, & quid ei proveniat boni quidve mali accidat, ex Dei voluntate suspendunt, si easdem stellas putant habere hanc potestatem traditam sibi à summa illius potestate, ut volentes ista decernant, magnam Cælo faciunt Injuriam: In cujus velut Clarissimo Senatu ac Splendidissima Curia scelera facienda decerni, qualia si aliqua terrena Civitas decrevisset, genere humano decernente fuerat evertenda. Aug. de C. D. l. 5. c. 1.

the inclinations they form in the Body (if they form any) could be no other than Innocent and Vertuous; I can never believe that Luſt or Falſhood, Malice or Cruelty can come down from above; or that our Minds ſhould be impregnated with Sin and Folly by the Influences of Heaven. No certainly, if there be any Vertue in the Stars that extends it ſelf to Man, it muſt rather be the Seed of Life, and Health, and Vertue, than of Diſeaſes, Death or Vice. I can eaſily fall in with the opinion of thoſe Learned Men in *Cælius Rhodiginus*, who thought that that Vertue of Celeſtial Bodies, which tended of it ſelf to Excellent Ends, was marred and perverted by a vitious Education. And ſo the Gravity of *Saturn* did degenerate into Sullenneſs, Niggardlineſs and Melancholy. The Magnanimity of *Mars* into Raſhneſs and Foolhardineſs. The Sharpneſs and Sagacity of *Mercury* into miſchievous Craft and deceitful Subtilty. The Sweetneſs and Gentleneſs of *Venus* into filthy Luſt, and ſo on: And this Thought does well become every one that pretends to any Religion, whether, Revealed or Natural: For this is Conſonant to the excellency of the Divine Nature.

Rhodig. Lect. l. 2. c. 20.

But

But this ſort of Fate ſpringing from the Influence of any Natural Bodies, is not only repugnant to Reaſon, but to our Senſe and Experience: For nothing is more plain than this, that any ſuch Influence cannot affect the Mind, but through the Body, and we do frequently find our Reaſon aſſerting its Power and Dominion againſt all the force and ſtrength of the Body! Nor doth Reaſon only, but in every Nation, Law and Cuſtom triumph over the ſtrongeſt Inclinations of Nature. As the Innocence of the *Scythes*, the Chaſtity of thoſe in *Arabia* and *Ofroene*, the Abſtinence of the *Brachmans*, and numberous Inſtances which he that pleaſes may ſee in *Bardeſanes* the *Syrian*, and others, does abundantly manifeſt, that their manners are the Effects not of the Influence of thoſe Planets that rule their Birth, but of thoſe Laws & Cuſtoms that rule their Country. Since therefore that *Neceſſity* which our natural Tempers and Inclinations do impoſe upon the Mind, is the utmoſt Fate that we can imagine to proceed from the Influence of any Natural Bodies, 'tis Nonſenſe to ſuppoſe that Fate inſuperable or uncontroulable, which we ſee baffled and defeated every day, and in every Nation.

Fate repugnant to ſenſe and experience.

The

The ſum of thoſe Reaſons I have offer'd againſt Fate is this, If we make God the Author of it, we impiouſly Charge him with what is repugnant to his Nature, for a Good God cannot be the Cauſe of Man's Sin and Miſery: If *Matter*, we ridiculouſly ſuppoſe, that what is it ſelf ſenſeleſs and inanimate ſhould produce and govern a Being endow'd with *Life*, *Underſtanding* and *Liberty*: If the Stars, we run again into the ſame abſurdities; for if they have their fatal Influence from God, then properly ſpeaking, God is the Author, they but the Inſtrument of our Fate. If from themſelves, then our Dependence on, and Worſhip of, God is vain, and beſides we abſurdly ſubject the Reaſon and the Liberty of the Mind of Man to the ſenſeleſs Tyranny of Atoms. If from the Conſideration of the Cauſes of Fate we deſcend to examine what our Experience teaches us, what common ſenſe informs us, each of 'em bears witneſs to the Soveraignty and Liberty of the Mind of Man.

The conſequences of Fate.

If we ſhould come in the laſt place to Examine what would be the Conſequences of a Fatal *Neceſſity* over-ruling Man and Humane Affairs, they are ſuch as are not only groſly Contradictious in them-

themselves, but Fatal and Destructive both to the publick and private Good of Mankind. 'Tis true, were the Liberty of doing Evil taken from Man, we should have no Reason to complain, for then there would be nothing wanting to make the state of Man Happy as that of Angels, but Immortality: But to bereave Man of all Power to do good, to necessitate and compel him to be wicked, how dreadful are the Effects which must follow this? He that Stains his hands in the Bould of his Soveraign or his Parent, will accuse his Stars not himself; he that pollutes himself in the Incestuous Embraces of a Mother or a Daughter may defend his Action as his Fate not Choice; and how readily shall we do all that Rage or Lust invites us to; when there is an Excuse prepared for all we do; for he is no more blameable who commits the Evil which he could not help, than he is worthy of Praise who did the Good which he could not forbear. Were it true, that whatever mischief Man did he were necessitated to do, we might with more Justice arraign the Stars and Atoms, than Malefactors; and all the Instruments of Mischief would be every Jot as Guilty and Crimi-

nal, as the Man that us'd them. Were this true we might as properly betake our selves to *Magick* and *Inchantments*, as to Advices and Exhortations, when we would reclaim the vicious; nor yet could the one be more Effectual than the other; for what could alter what is unalterable? And for the same Reason we might forbear our Sacrifices and Prayers, since what will be, must be, and cannot be otherwise.

Desine Fata Deum flecti sperare precando.
Tou strive in vain with Prayers to move
The inexorable Fates above.

Repentance and Tears then may be, what *Seneca* calls Expiation, *Ægræ mentis solatia*, *The deluding Dreams of a superstitious Mind*; but could never procure us any real Advantage; so that on this Supposition, what is now thought the only Wisdom, would be then the only Folly of a Sinner, *Repentance*. I think I may conclude here, for if it be not by this time Evident, whether Reason be for or against Fate, we may justly despair of discovering what Reason dictates in this or any o-

ther

ther Queſtion. I will now proceed to Examine,

What plain Text of Scripture ſpeaks in this Point. And here in the firſt place we are to expect no other Fate than what depends upon God; for the Scripture makes all things derive their Original from him, and all things depend upon him, there is but one Creator, and one Lord, and therefore the Creature can be ſubject to no Laws but ſuch as he Enacts; ſo that whatever Fate we now lye under, muſt be imputed to the voluntary Decree of God. Is then the Eternal Ruine of Man Fatal and Unavoidable? If we enquire into the Original of this Unhappy Neceſſity, it muſt be ultimately reſolved into the Divine Will; when God then decreed the inevitable Ruine of Man, under what Notion did he conſider his Ruine? Under that of *Miſery*? Or that of *Puniſhment*? If under the Notion of Puniſhment, this implies plainly, that we are to thank our ſelves for our Ruine: For Puniſhment is nothing elſe but the Infliction of that Miſery which our Sin and Folly have deſerved: But if under the Notion of Miſery, how can this conſiſt with the *Scripture againſt Fate.*

Infinite Goodneſs or Wiſdom of God? Alas! How contradictory is this to Scripture? There God ſwears that he delights not in the Death of a *Sinner*; This Decree would ſuppoſe him to delight in the Death of the *Innocent*: There he is repreſented *full of Compaſſion*, and *ſlow to Wrath*, even upon repeated Provocations, this Decree repreſents him ſo addicted to Wrath and Cruelty, that he made a World on purpoſe to have whereon to exerciſe it, and doth exerciſe it meerly for the delight he takes in it; The Scripture finally repreſents him full of Divine Love for Mankind, and not only not deſirous that they ſhould periſh, but extreamly deſirous that they ſhould be partakers of Everlaſting Life; this Decree ſuppoſes him ſo utter an Enemy to, and hater of, Mankind, that he made the far greater part to no other End, but only to make em miſerable. Let any unprejudiced Perſon judge now, whether this be not as Contradictory to Scripture as it is to Senſe: Nor is it poſſible that any one unleſs prejudiced ſhould look into Holy Writ and not diſcern evidently that Man's Ruine is the Effect of Sin, not only wilfully and preſumptuouſly committed, but alſo obſtinately and impenitently per-

perſiſted in: And that God is ſo far from being fond of our Sufferings and Calamities, that he is ever and anon bewailing the Diſappointment of his Love, the Defeat of his Grace and Mercy by our Obſtinacy and Impenitence: it is the voice of his Son, 'tis the voice of God, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the Prophets, and ſtoneth them which are ſent unto thee: How often would I have gather'd thy Children together, even as a Hen gathers her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not!* If therefore we deſire to know what the Will of God is, with reſpect to Man, this is a full and plain Declaration of it; there can be no other, much leſs any Contradictory to this, if I may not confidently rely upon this Declaration of the Divine *Will*, there is no reveal'd Truth that I can depend upon: Nor can Revelation ſtand us in any ſtead, for nothing can be aſſerted with greater Perſpicuity or ſtronger Aſſeveration. But I have no ſcruples in me about this Matter, I have no Fears nor Jealouſys of any ſecret Decree or latent *Will*, repugnant to his declar'd one; I am as ſure that God is *Good* and *True*, as that he is Eternal or Almighty: And were he not, we could reap but very Math. 23.

little Comfort from all his other Attributes, how great or glorious soever in themselves. But blessed be God, if from examining those Declarations of his *Will*, which God has made us, we proceed to examine the Manner and Method of his Government as it relates to Mankind (which is another and the only way left us to judge of his Will and Decrees) we shall find no Instance in the whole Series of Divine Dispensations, which can create in us the least Suspition of lying under an Arbitrary and Tyrannical Fate: Nay, if we consider the Acts of Divine Providence, we shall find the quite Contrary, that God so governs the World, that the Issues of things are not fatal and unavoidable, but dependant upon our selves, that God is free, Man free, and the Events of things free, from any inevitable Necessity; God indeed is ever bound to do what is best, what is wisest, and can do no otherwise; This is the only Fate that God is subject to; But a Possibility of Different Events is no way repugnant to his Wisdom, Justice or Goodness. In a proper Sense therefore there is no Fate above him, that can impose a Necessity upon him, nor does

he impoſe any upon himſelf: If there were in any part of his Government, a fatal and a peremptory Neceſſity, we ſhould certainly find the tracks and foot-ſteps of it amongſt inanimate and ſenſitive Beings: How great a Liberty does God make uſe of in this part of his Government; The Sun, whoſe Courſe Joſh. 1. ſeems certain and invariable as the Imaginary Laws of Fate, ſhall, if need be, ſtand ſtock ſtill, or what is more, move backwards towards it's Eaſt. An inſtance of both we read of in Scripture, when God thought fit to execute his Judgments upon the *Amorites*. And con- 2 Kings 20 deſcended to give *Hezekiah* a miraculous Aſſurance of his Mercy: The fire ſhall not exert it's natural Heat, but ſhall ceaſe to burn and conſume, and when he ſees fit (as in the caſe of the Dan. 3. three Children) become as harmleſs as the morning Light: The Waters ſhall ceaſe to flow as did the Red Sea, when the Army of *Iſrael* march'd through it, and ſaw with horrour and delight, the rowling Waves ſtand fix'd and unmov'd as the Rocks and Shores that bounded them; and yet what Neceſſity, what Fate can we conceive more immutable, whatever Connexion of Natural Cauſes

it be produc'd by, than that which makes the Sun move, the Fire burn, the Water flow? If we consider his Government of Kingdoms, where if any were the Periods and Revolutions of Misery and Prosperity should seem fatal and immutable; here again we shall find the footsteps of unquestionable Liberty; Let us for Instance consider God's Government of the *Jews*, what are the Laws which God obliges himself to observe towards them? *If ye walk in my Statutes, and keep my Commandments and do them; then I will give you Rain in due Season, and the Land shall yield her increase, and the Trees of the field shall yield their Fruit: And your threshing shall reach unto the Vintage, and the Vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: And ye shall eat your bread to the Full, and dwell in your Land safely &c. But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these Commandments, And if ye shall despise my Statutes, or if your Soul abhor my Judgments, so that you will not do all my Commandments, but that ye break my Covenant. I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you Terrour, Consumption, and the burning Ague that shall Consume the Eyes, and cause Sorrow of Heart;* Lev 26. 3, 4, &c. And 14, 15, 16, &c.

and

and ye ſhall ſow your ſeed in vain, for your Enemies ſhall eat it, &c. Doth not God here lay Life and Death, Good and Evil before them? Is not the one and the other to be the Effect of their own Choice, their own Behaviour? Are we not reaſonably to ſuppoſe the *Iſraelites* at the time of entering into that Covenant, whereof theſe are the Sanctions, as Capable of Happineſs, as they were of Miſery? What was finally the Iſſue of things? The *Jews* rebelled and revolted from God, and as he threatned, they were harraſſed and exhauſted by continual Plagues and Puniſhments. Well, did this happen ſo, becauſe it could not happen otherwiſe? Was this the Event, the fatal Event of things which God did really *Will*, and immutably and peremptorily reſolve from the beginning, notwithſtanding whatever Profeſſions he might make of his ſincere deſire of the welfare and proſperity of that People? Let God himſelf be the Judge, who beſt underſtands his own Mind. *O that my* Pſal. 81. *People had hearken'd to me, and Iſrael had walked in my ways: I ſhould ſoon have ſubdued their Enemies, and turned my hand againſt their Adverſaries: The haters of the Lord ſhould have ſubmitted themſelves*

selves unto him, but their time should have endured for ever. By this, sure, if we can judge of the meaning of God by any of his Expressions, we may safely conclude, not only that the Obedience and Prosperity of *Israel* were things possible, and consequently their Disobedience and Ruine was not fatal; but also that their Obedience and Prosperity were the things which God did most heartily and sincerely desire. If we come to God's Government of particular Men, we may be sure that this is of a piece with his Government of Mankind or Kingdoms, it being nothing else but a more particular Application of those Universal Laws of Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice by which he Rules. An Instance of Liberty in Temporal Events, we meet with in that Voyage which St. *Luke* describes *Acts* 27. Verse the Tenth, we have St. *Paul* foretelling the Fate that was like to attend themselves and their Ship, if they pursued the Voyage they had resolved on: *Vers.* 19. We meet with the Accomplishment in part, of his Prediction. Darkness and Horrour invades 'em, Seas break in upon 'em, and at the same breach had Death entered, had not Divine Providence interposed in Favour, and at the Request

Acts 27.

Request of St. *Paul*. Was this their Suffering fatal? Was it unavoidable? Had they not escaped the Tempest, if they had believed St. *Paul*, and not departed from *Crete*? Or was their obstinacy or unbelief as fatal as the Danger and Damage which attended it? The Expostulation of St. *Paul*, *Ver.* 21. will easily clear this Doubt, *Ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from* Crete, *and to have gained this harm and loss.* What then! Shall we think the Issues of Eternity fatal when those of time wherein we are comparatively so little concern'd are free? Shall God not only leave us the use of our Reason, but also assist us by the Aid of his Providence for the avoiding temporal Evils, and will he allow us neither for the avoiding of Eternal ones? Must temporal Ruine be the Effect only of our sinful Choice and Obstinacy, Eternal Ruine the Effect not of our Folly or Sin, but *Fate*? No surely, how often do we find God in the *Revelation* respiting his final Sentence, and giving Men space and time to repent? but they repented not? 'Tis true, and this was their Obstinacy, not their Fate; for if Repentance had been impossible, to what purpose did God allow 'em time

for

for it? That they might fill up the Measure of their Iniquity: an excellent Paraphrase! Whom shall I believe? God saith, he gave the *Sinner* time to *Repent*; thou say'st he gave him time to *Sin*; God says, he gave him time to make himself capable of Mercy; thou say'st, he gave him time only to increase his Guilt and Punishment: How cruel are the Mercies of some Men! this is just such a Grace or Favour as griping Usurers vouchsafe the careless Debtor, whose Fortune and Estate they would swallow up and devour.

I have now I hope dispersed those Clouds which seemed to hover over our heads big with Storm and Ruine; I mean those melancholly Imaginations which scare and terrific the weak and superstitious Minds of Men: We may now boldly pursue, and possess our selves of Happiness: The way to it is open, there is no cruel Deity, no spiteful Fortune, no inexorable Fate that will oppose us; there is no God but one of Love and Goodness, which moderates his Almighty Power, and tempers the Severity of his Justice; a God who passionately desires our Happiness, and delights in

nothing

nothing more than in promoting it; All is lightſom and chearful where he is, Perfection and Happineſs dwell with him, *in his preſence is fulneſs of Joy, and at his right hand are Pleaſures for evermore.* He ſcatters and diſſipates Evil and Troubles by the Light of his Countenance, Death and Hell fly far from before him, and hide themſelves in their own Darkneſs. What can we apprehend from ſuch a God as this is! How can he delight in our Miſery who is all *Love*! No, nothing but our guilt or folly can raiſe our Fears, we may reſt ſecure of his Favour, if we do not deſpiſe it; nor can he ever be made our Enemy unleſs we firſt become the Enemies of Vertue and Goodneſs: what then have we to fear? There is no Fate but the immutable Law of God, that Univerſal Law which adjudges Happineſs to the Righteous, and Miſery to the Wicked: There is no Fortune but his Providence; which is nothing but the Execution of that one general Law, and the Application of it's ſeveral parts, in particular Inſtances: 'tis plain therefore we have nothing now to fear but our ſelves, if we be but true to our own Reaſon, and faithful to our Intereſt, we may confidently preſume both

Pſal. 16.

both of the Aſſiſtance and Reward of Heaven; there is therefore nothing left now to excuſe us from the guilt of our own Ruine; but only that which is wont to be objected by ſuch as are enſlaved to ſome impious Luſt, and groan under the weight of thoſe Chains which they made themſelves, I mean an Incapacity of Happineſs, which is a fourth Objection againſt the poſſibility of Attaining Happineſs, and is now to be conſidered.

CHAP. VI.

CHAP. VI.

Of Incapacity.

The Plea of Incapacity, ſuppoſes Vertue a ſufficient Foundation of Happineſs. Incapacity Three-fold, Natural, Moral, Penal. *There is no natural Incapacity of Happineſs. Grace and Nature reconciled. The Strength of each examined, And demonſtrated in Fact, With Reference to Cuſtom and Faſhion. Pain and Pleaſure. The Force of Inclination Examined. Dulneſs Conſidered, And a light thoughtleſs temper.* Sect. 2. *Of Moral Incapacity. The Corruption of Nature, and Divine Aſſiſtance, how far they influence the preſent Subject.* 3. *Of Penal Incapacity.*

THEY who urge their Incapacity as an Objection againſt the poſſibility of attaining Happineſs do ſuppoſe Happineſs to conſiſt in Vertue, in the Pleaſure that flows from it, and the bliſs that will one Day or other Eternally reward it: They acknowledge, could they but be Vertuous, they ſhould be Happy; but they deſpair of obtaining ſuch

ſuch a Conqueſt over their Vices as may ſuffice to render their life ſmooth, equal and ſteady: And preſerve the Peace of their Conſcience by giving 'em an unqueſtionable Proof of their Sincerity towards God; without which 'tis impoſſible that they ſhould be fill'd with a rational Joy and Peace, or abound in a rational Hope. This therefore muſt be the ſuppoſition of my following Diſcourſe.

There may be three different kinds of Incapacities fancied, which for Diſtinction ſake I'le call *Natural*, *Moral* and *Penal*: each of which may be thus explain'd in the Notion the Objector forms of 'em: *Penal* Incapacity is that deſperate ſtate wherein Man is by God immutably rejected both from Pardon and Aſſiſtance. *Moral* Incapacity reſults from the Strength and Abſoluteneſs of that Dominion which Sin has eſtabliſhed over ſome Men, through a long and continued courſe of Wickedneſs. *Natural* Incapacity conſiſts in ſuch an Unteachable ſtupidity of Temper, or in ſuch violent and invincible Inclinations to Vice, or in ſuch a ſlightneſs, levity and inconſtancy of Mind as render Men utterly unfit to receive any laſting Impreſſions of Vertue, or to make any ſteady and reſolute Attempt of attaining it.

I'le

I'le begin with this firſt, and here I deſire to be excuſed if I do not take upon me to mark out the diſtinct bounds and limits of *Nature* and *Grace*; Theſe two Siſters are not like thoſe *Chaldee* Brethren, * *Abraham* and *Lot*, that were too mighty to dwell together. No, they delight to mix in loving Embraces, their Wealth and Power encreaſes by being United; and like ſome Plants I have read of, they never thrive when divided: I ſhall not diſpute, what Power in Man is a Birthright, what a Donative; for alas! Every thing he poſſeſſes is a Grace, a Favour of his Prince: His Natural Abilities are ſo many Graces he derives from God, and as properly ſuch as any acceſſion to 'em which is inſpired afterwards: So that when ever I contend that any thing is in the Power of Man, I deſire to be underſtood of all that Power which God has inveſted him with, whether Natural or Supernatural. *There is no Natural incapacity of Happineſs.* * Gen. 13.

Did Man decry and vilifie Nature, to beget in themſelves the more profound Humility, and the more wakeful and ſolicitous Induſtry, did they like the *Semnones*, in *Tacitus*, load themſelves with Chains as the Badge of their ſubjection to, and dependence upon, the Deity, De Morib. German.

ty, did they magnifie Divine Grace, in order to convince themselves of the Necessity and Efficacy of it, and so to enflame their Importunity and Industry in Quest of it; This were Piety and Devotion, not Error; or however they might exaggerate the Impotence of Nature beyond strict Truth, yet this would be a Safe and Pious Error, as all humble and modest ones are: But when they endeavour to represent Nature vile and corrupt, on purpose that they may the more licentiously pollute and abuse it, when they Magnifie and Exalt Divine Grace out of a most contradictious and Prepostrous design to justifie their Neglect and Contempt of it, for they would fain have all to be so intirely imputed to Grace, that they would not themselves be put to as much as the trouble of seeking it, 'tis not only an Error, but a Pernicious and Fatal one; for he that abandons the use of his Reason, renders himself incapable of any Heavenly Aid: God gives his Grace to Men, not Beasts; I must therefore oppose this Fancy, and endeavour to perswade Men, that it is in their Power to be Virtuous and Happy: Nor can I think this Assertion any ways injurious to the Honour or Good-

neſs of God, if it be remembred, that whatever Power I attribute to Men, I acknowledge derived from God. I will therefore with good Aſſurance proceed and try whether I cannot take in and demoliſh this Fort which ſtops our way to Happineſs.

They who affirm a great part of Mankind incapable of Virtue, forget that they diſhonour God whilſt they reproach their Nature: For were it ſo, To what end could we Imagine ſuch Men endowed with Reaſon and Underſtanding? Not to worſhip but deſie their Maker? And was it for this End that they were made Immortal too? Had God made Men only to take his Paſtime in the World, like the *Leviathan* in the Waves, ſuch a Soul as that which moves the Fiſh of the Sea, or the Beaſts of the Earth, a Senſitive Soul had been moſt proper for this End: Then might he have enjoy'd himſelf without Reluctancy, without Controul, without Remorſe, without Shame: What can be the proper work of a Rational Creature, to which you allow not a Capacity of Vertue and Religion? Till you can ſhew me this, I can never believe that God ſhould endow Man with a Ra-

tional and Immortal Mind out of any other Design than ſuch a one as might become ſuch a Being Created after his own Image, which is the Practice of Holineſs and Vertue. But what ſhould I wonder that Men ſhould not be aware of their contradicting Reaſon when they ſeem to be inſenſible of that Contradiction even to the common Senſe and Experience of Mankind which they are guilty of? To what purpoſe are there ſo many Schools of Learning and good Manners founded? To what purpoſe are there ſo many Treatiſes of the Education of Youth writ? To what purpoſe does the wakeful Parent ſtrive to inculcate the Seeds of Vertue into the Child, and train him up by a wiſe Diſcipline to the Practice and Cuſtom of Vertue? To what purpoſe is the propoſal of Rewards and Puniſhments, and the Reſtraint of Laws, if either they cannot raiſe thoſe Hopes and Fears they aim at, or if Hopes and Fears be altogether uſeleſs and ineffectual, if no Inſtruction, no Diſcipline can mould and faſhion rough, unpoliſhed, crooked, incorrigible Nature? Now here tho any Man might have confidence enough to diſparage the Judgement of Mankind, and

attribute all the Pains they take in the Education of Youth, or the Government and Direction of riper Years, to Cuſtom not to right Reaſon; yet ſurely he would not ſo far diſparage his own Obſervation and Knowledge as utterly to deny the ſucceſs of theſe means; for not to inſtance in particulars, 'tis not unknown to any one the leaſt verſed in the Hiſtory of the World, that there have been National Vertues as well as Vices; That there have been times wherein Learning and Religion have been as much in Faſhion and Reputation, as Wickedneſs and Barbariſm in others: Shall we ſay, thoſe Nations, thoſe times bred none of thoſe Natures, which the Objector affirms are uncapable of Vertue? Let 'em ſhow what Heavenly Influences, what miraculous Power produced this Change in Nature: What ſhould I urge the Power of vain and falſe principles, the mighty force even of irrational Cuſtoms, vanquiſhing thoſe Inclinations which are more deeply rooted, more cloſely interwove with our Blood and Spirits then any Inclination to Vice and Folly can be? Such are for Example the love of Life, and the Abhorrence of Pain, and yet what a Con-

tempt of Death is to be found even in the most timorous Sex, as in the *Indian* Women! What a Contempt of Pain even in the weakest Age, as in the *Spartan* Youth! And all this having no stronger Foundation than irrational Custom, and vain Phantastick Principles? Why should we therefore be unwilling to attribute to excellent Principles and vertuous Customs, blessed and aided by Heaven, as much Power and Vertue as we do to such as these? If the Natural tendencies of Man to wickedness can be curbed, if his most furious and violent Passions can be restrained and stifled, then I think, it may be as reasonably supposed that Divine Truths, Religious Discipline, together with the Grace of God may effect this, as any thing else whatever. If the prevailing Necessities and Perplexities of the State could change the softness and luxury of *Otho* into Military Hardship and Courage; I know not why a rational Scale of the true Honour and Glory of Vertue, and of our Eternal Interest, and innumerable other Considerations which the Gospel lays before us Christians, should not be able to work the same wonders? If the Reverence of *Seneca* or the Senate, or a-

ny other Motive could produce a *Quinquennium Neronis*, could restrain the violent inclinations of that wretched Man, so that his Government for so many years, should be as gentle and just as that of the most Gracious and Vertuous Princes, why would not the Reverence of God, and the Terrors of Eternity be able to awe and curb the most vicious Nature? This methinks ought well to be weigh'd by all who assert Man's Impotence and Incapacity of Vertue, they disparage the Gospel and reproach Grace as well as Man with Impotence and Insufficiency; and yet both the one and the other is the Power of God, and that in order to Salvation: do you Consider, that if you suppose Man by Nature unable to do any thing that is Good, and then deny him, and utterly debar him from God's Grace, you introduce Fate; for what more fatal Necessity can a wretched Creature lie under than *Natural Impotence* utterly destitute and for ever forsaken of Divine Assistance? Or if you bereave not Man of Grace, but yet bereave Grace of *its Sufficiency*, do you not understand that the fatal Necessity continues still the same? There is no Change in the Man's

Condition, only in this Hypotheſis, Grace is diſhonoured and reproached as well as Nature? And this reflects very rudely too upon God, it calls the Wiſdom, the Goodneſs, the Sincerity, the Power of God into Diſpute: 'Tis inconſiſtent with the *Power* of God not to be able by his Spirit and Truth to ſubdue and over-power the Corruptions of Nature; 'tis inconſiſtent with his *Goodneſs*, not to be willing to aid his poor Creatures, when they call upon him; inconſiſtent with his *Sincerity* to afford 'em ſuch aid, as muſt tend to their greater miſchief not good, as Grace it ſelf would, if it were only ſufficient to increaſe their Guilt, but not to ſubdue their Sin: This were indeed *when a Child asked Bread to give him a Stone, and when he asked Fiſh to give him a Scorpion.* 'Tis laſtly, as inconſiſtent with the *Wiſdom* of God to confer Grace to no purpoſe, as it was with his Goodneſs to confer it to an ill one. Theſe with many others are the abſurd Conſequences which attend the Denial of the *Univerſality*, or *Sufficiency* of Grace; but if on the other hand, we do grant that God Almighty is ready to aſſiſt every Man who calls on him in his Endeavours after

Matth. 7.

Vertue

Vertue and Happineſs, and that his Aſſiſtance is ſufficient to the End, for which 'tis deſigned; then we muſt needs acknowledge that 'tis in every Man's Power to be Good and Happy: For 'tis no more than to acknowledge that Man can do what he can do, or which is all one, what God has put in his Power to do. By what a croud of Arguments might I confirm this Truth, ſufficient to bear down and even ſhame the moſt Impudent Caviller? Why are not Men Good? Why are they not Happy? Shall we ſay that God doth not Vouchſafe 'em his Grace; ſhall we impute Men's miſery to God? Shall we charge that glorious and moſt perfect Being with want of Compaſſion or Sincerity towards his poor Creatures? How eaſie will it be for him to appeal to the Sufferings of his Son; to the vigorous Attempts and Endeavours of his Spirit; to Heaven and Earth ſtamped with the Impreſs of his *Power* and *Goodneſs*, on purpoſe to teach, invite and almoſt compel us to worſhip and obey him; to the various Methods of his Providences contriving and purſuing our Happineſs? How eaſily laſtly may he appeal for his Purgation to our own Conſciences? And theſe will

tell

tell us, as they ever do, in the Diſtreſſes of our Fortune and the Approaches of Danger and Death, to what we are to impute the Cauſe of our Ruine: what ſhall we ſay then? Doth God vouchſafe Men his Grace, the Revelation of his Truth, and the Aſſiſtances of his Spirit, but that this Grace is not ſufficient for us? Alas! How eaſie were it for any of us to refute this Fancy by appealing to the ſolemn Covenant of our Baptiſm, to the Characters and Deſcriptions of Good Men in the Goſpel, to the Effects which our Reaſon teaches us, muſt be Natural and inſeparable from a true Faith and Divine Aſſiſtance? But I will chooſe to make uſe of one Argument which St. *Paul* furniſhes us with, *Heb.* 11. there the Apoſtle proves the poſſibility of pleaſing God by Faith from undeniable Inſtances of Matter of Fact, inferring from what Men have actually done, what 'tis ſtill poſſible for 'em to do. Omitting the miraculous and extraordinary Effects of Faith, I will reduce the Inſtances of this Chapter to three Heads.

Heb. 11.

Firſt, Such wherein Faith appears victorious over the Temptations which ariſe from the vicious Cuſtoms of the Place

Men

Men dive in, from the prevalency and fashionableness of Sin amongst those they Converse with.

Secondly, Such wherein Faith triumphs over Temptations arising from sensual Pleasures.

Thirdly, Such wherein it overcomes the sense of Pain, and fear of approaching Evil.

Temptations from fashion conquered.

I will begin with the first sort of Instances. It must be confessed that considering the Propensions of our Body and the Vanity and Sensuality which the Mind naturally derives from it, and from it's Commerce with the World, that 'tis a difficult thing to encounter Temptations naked and alone; how much more Difficult when backed and assisted by Custom and *Fashion*, when universal Practice gives Authority and Reputation to Sin and Folly; and the poor Man is left destitute of the Assistance of good Counsel and the Encouragement of good Examples to encounter not only the Difficulty with which the Reluctancies of our Nature, but also the Reproach with which the popularity and

and prevalency of Sin cloggs and imbitters Vertue: And yet behold *Enoch* in a World (it ſeems) given up to Sin, did not only keep up in private to the Practice of deſpiſed forſaken Vertue; but was openly and in an extraordinary manner Eminent and Exemplary in it; and therefore was his End as extraordinary as his Life: *For having obtained this Teſtimony that he pleaſed God, he was tranſlated.* This was owing to his Faith, he was content to endure the Reproach of the World, that he might obtain the Approbation of God: And deſpiſe the Honour and Applauſe of popular Vice, and faſhionable Compliances, that he might gain the Kingdom wherein dwells Righteouſneſs. Such another Example was *Noah*, his Righteouſneſs was, like his Ark afterwards, rais'd above a Deluge not of Waters but Impiety; he lived in a World ſo wicked, that it grieved God at his heart that he had made it; in this World he was a Preacher and Example of Righteouſneſs, and his Zeal by an *Antiperiſtaſis*, was not quenched but enkindled by the wickedneſs of the World he lived in: This too was owing to his Faith, he fear'd thoſe threats which that Impious World ſcoffed at, and

ſo

ſo *prepared an Ark to the ſaving of his Houſe, by which he Condemned the World, and became Heir of the Righteouſneſs which is by Faith.* No doubt when this ſtrange Building was preparing, *Noah* was aſſaulted by all the Raillery and Contempt, by all the ſhews of Wit and Reaſon, Luſt and Prophaneneſs could furniſh an impious Age with: This Man (ſay they) has ever been Singular and Phantaſtick in the whole Method of his Converſation; there wanted but ſuch a prank as this to compleat Fancy into Madneſs: He ever dream'd of Judgments, and yet we (he threatn'd) continu'd our Mirth and Pleaſure, he alone in Fears and Anxieties has ſuffer'd the Evils which his Melancholy Fancy created, and which are all that we ſhall ever ſee: For how long has he been Preaching dreadful things, and yet ſtill the Sun ſhines, the Heavens are fair and clear, our Feaſts and Luſts have the ſame reliſh ſtill: Nor does our Experience only convince us of the Falſhood, but our Reaſon of the Impoſſibility of this Man's Dreams; for which way ſhall the fixed ſtate of Nature be turned upſide down? Whence will this univerſal Deluge come? Will his God break C. 7.

up

up the Fountains of the Deep? Or will he open the Cataracts of Heaven? But while they thus profanely ſcoffed and meaſured the Divine Power by their depraved Fancies, *Noah* religiouſly fear'd, who had a different ſenſe of the Majeſty of God and Provocation of Sin: He knew that as Mercy, ſo Wrath is with
Eccluſ. 16. God: That as he is *mighty to forgive, ſo is he too to pour out Diſpleaſure.* And by this Faith he preſerved himſelf as from the Impiety, ſo from the Puniſhment of the Old World; For tho he was not like *Enoch* tranſlated, yet being preſerved out of a general Ruine, he lived to ſee an End of the Old World, and give beginning to the New.—— To theſe I might add *Lot*, whoſe righteous Soul was not infected, but provoked and griqved by the Impieties of *Sodom*. *Joſhua*, as Eminent for his Faith, as Victories, who reſolved whatever Courſe the *Iſraelites* would take (who to the laſt ſtood in need of as great Prodigies to reſcue 'em from Idolatry, as once
Joſh. 24. from *Egypt*) *He and his Houſe would ſerve the Lord.* Theſe Inſtances are ſufficient to ſhew the Power of Faith in its Victory over popular Errors and faſhionable Sins, and by Conſequence, over many

many Inclinations at once; for the popularity and prevalency of any Sin is a bait appropriated to our Pride and Vanity, which makes Men affect Precedence and Superiority in all things which the World admires and applauds; nor is this all, it awakens our natural Inclinations, and invites us to gratifie 'em, nay, it enrages natural Appetite by giving it Security and Confidence, and by working upon the Fancy and Imagination: For the Sin is always wonderfully set off, that is prevailing and fashionable. I will now pass on to the

Second sort of Instances, wherein we may behold the Strength and Power of Faith in its Victory over all Temptations, which sensual Pleasure can present us. Numerous are the Instances of this kind which I might produce among the Heathens, where we may find a Sense of of the Dignity of Humane Nature, of the Decency and Honour of Vertue and a perswasion of the Necessity of Purity in order to a future state, atchieving most manifest Victories over all Carnal and Sensual Lusts; but I will confine my self to two in this Chapter: The first is that of *Moses*, and this is a very *Pleasure Conquered.*

very full and comprehenſive one. His Station being ſo near the Crown of *Egypt* preſented him at once with all that the World can entertain ſenſual Man with: There was Pleaſure, the Snare of the Soft: There was Power and Wealth, the Temptations of the Ambitious Mind; (falſly called great) and there was Honour, the airy Bait of vain unballaſted Minds. Theſe each of them ſingle and alone have like *Saul* and *David* ſlain their Thouſands and ten Thouſands; and yet that it may appear that their overthrow is to be imputed to their own Negligence and Folly, behold here *Moſes* triumphing by Faith over all theſe, *i. e.* over all the ſtrengths and forces of ſenſual Pleaſures joyned and united together: When he was come to years, he refuſed to be called the Son of *Pharaoh's* Daughter, and ſo deſerted a Station wherein nothing was bigger than his preſent Enjoyments, if he had pleaſed, unleſs his future Hopes, which is the utmoſt Felicity of a ſtate of Senſuality. And what is more yet, what was it he did quit all this for? What was it that he did chooſe in Exchange? Was his Soul too little to fill the great place he left? No, *Moſes* his Courage was great

great as any thing, but his Meekneſs and Humility. Was that height too open and too buſie for ſenſual Enjoyments, and ſo he retired like *Tiberius* to *Capria*, that he might indulge himſelf with more ſecurity and freedom, and fewer Interruptions? No, he changed Pleaſure for Affliction, Treaſure for Reproach? The Court of *Ægypt* for the Deſart of *Midian*, *he choſe rather to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleaſures of Sin for a Seaſon: Eſteeming the Reproach of Chriſt greater Riches than the Treaſures of* Ægypt. This was all the great work of Faith: His Mind was betimes poſſeſſed with a juſt Notion of, and awful Reverence for the God of his Fathers, the God of Heaven and Earth; and therefore beyond the Wants and Dangers of the *Deſart*, he diſcover'd the Peace and Plenty of *Canaan*, and beyond both the Glories of Eternity; and therefore reaſonably concluded that it was more eligible to be the Son of God than of *Pharaoh's* Daughter, to be the Heir of Heaven than of the Crown of *Ægypt*; all this is intimated Verſe 26. *for he had reſpect to the Recompence of the Reward.*

I will add but one Inſtance more to that of *Moſes*, and indeed there can be

but one Instance added that is greater, which is that of *Abraham* offering up *Isaac*. In the former we have seen Faith triumphing over superfluous and unnecessary Pleasures; in this we shall see it triumphing over the Natural and inseparable Appetites of Man. What might not *Abraham*, if he had been under the Power of any Principle but that of Faith, have objected against this Command of God? What, shall I Sacrifice my Son, my only Son? This is a Sacrifice might become *Baal* or *Moloch*, but how unsuitable to the Nature of that God I worship? Nor is this less repugnant to his Veracity than his Goodness: Shall I Sacrifice the Son of the Promise? Is it for this I have forsook my Home, my Countrey, my Birthright, and follow'd God through Inhospitable Desarts and more Inhospitable Nations? Are all my Expectations of a numerous and glorious Posterity come to this at last? Thus might *Abraham* have argued, but having a firm belief of the Power, Goodness and Faithfulness of God, he would not go about to prescribe his Wisdom Methods, or to limit his Omnipotence by unbelieving Fancies, or derogatory Conceptions concerning it, but firmly be-

believing that he could do whatever he pleased, that he would do whatever he promised; *he that had received the promises, offer'd up his only begotten Son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac thy Seed shall be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the Dead; from whence also he received him in a Figure.* We have seen Men vanquishing all the Pleasures that the World can present us with, and consequently all those Inclinations and Appetites by which we are carried towards 'em. Faith in these Men encountred and defeated whatever strength and force can be supposed either in Fancy or Imagination or in sensual Appetite, or in Natural Affection. The Conclusion deducible from hence is, That there is no desire of worldly Pleasure in Man so vehement, but that it may be conquer'd; and consequently that we cannot be necessarily betray'd into Sin by any inbred Inclination of this kind: There is but one Natural Principle more, from whence we can imagine any Necessity of sinning to arise, which is an Aversion to all Pain or Trouble: There are therefore Temptations suited to this Principle in us, such as deter us from our Duty, either by

by the ſenſe of preſent, or the fear of impending Evil: And it is thought to be the higheſt and difficulteſt Trial of Vertue to ſurmount theſe Temptations, *i. e.* to be Vertuous, when Vertue is immediately attended or viſibly threatned with great Evils. And yet behold,

Pain Conquered.

Thirdly, In this Chapter numerous Inſtances of as great Conſtancy in ſuffering Pain, as we have ſeen before of Continence in Rejecting Pleaſure. Verſ. 35, 36, 37. *Others were tortured not accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Reſurrection. And others had trial of Cruel Mockings and Scourgings, yea moreover of Bonds and Impriſonment, they were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the Sword; they wandred about in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented.* See here Faith triumphing over all thoſe things that are the Dread and Terrour of Humane Nature, Reproach, Impriſonment, Baniſhment, Death, Death in all its moſt affrightful Shapes, Death in all its variety of Torments, nay, many Deaths in the lingring Torments they were frequently put to; how ſtrong, how firm is this frail weak Nature when ſup-

supported by a Divine Faith! All these expected a Happy Resurrection, they saw beyond these Midnight Clouds, the Dawnings of Eternity, and unspeakable Comforts ready to swallow up and extinguish the memory of their Sufferings; and in this Confidence they outbraved all sorts of Evils. Nor is it to be wondred at, if Faith which overcomes the sense of present Evils, should disperse the fears of future ones: Hence it was that the Parents of *Moses* despised the Menaces of *Pharaoh*, a Prince Arbitrary in his Power, Cruel in his Temper, resolv'd and bloody in the Execution of Mischief.—— Hence it was that *Moses* in the same manner despised the Wrath of this King, and well-knowing that no place would be able to protect him from his Power and Cruelty but the Desart, he forsook *Egypt*, and fled thither; where he could not but foresee he was to encounter insuperable Difficulties; but he endured, *as seeing him who is invisible*, and knew that the God of Heaven was every where present, and that in despight of every thing under his Protection he should be both Safe and Happy.

Now since there is no Evil the World can threaten us with equal to that of

Torments and Death, it were vain and superfluous after we have seen these Conquer'd, to fancy other Evils of a much slighter Nature unconquerable; it were absurd to think that that Man could be frighted from his Duty by popular Reproach, or the Displeasure of great Men, or the Diminution of his Estate, who cannot by Death it self; twere absurd to fancy that he who despises Imprisonments, Stripes, Hunger, Nakedness, Torment, in Obedience to his Duty and respect to its Reward, shou'd be discouraged by any little Austerities or Hardships which Vertue may sometimes exact from him.

Tell me now then, you who complain of the Corruption and Impotence of Man, you who magnifie the Force and Power of Temptation, and from both infer the Impossibility of being Vertuous, and consequently of being Happy, what have you to answer to these things, these Matters of Unquestionable Fact? You see Resolution and Faith in these Examples raised to that height and strength, which no worldly, no carnal Temptation can resist; tell me then why should the Faith of a *Jew* out do that of a Christian; were their Promises more Glorious and there-

therefore more Efficacious than ours? Look how far short Time is of Eternity, Corruption of Incorruption: So far was their *Canaan* of our Heaven: But suppose they had (as these sure had) a Prospect of the same Heaven, had they a clearer sight of it, or more convincing Evidence of the certainty of it than we have? Alas their *Schechina*, *Bath-col*, the Thunders and Lightnings of Mount *Sinai*, their Pillar of Cloud and Fire were not half so clear assurances of God amongst em, as that Glory which shon in the face of Jesus Christ, that Power Communicated from above to his Apostles, the Resurrection of *Jesus* from the Dead, and his Ascension into Heaven, were a manifest Testimony of God, asserting and bearing witness to the truth of our Religion, and particularly of that Fundamental Article in it, the Resurrection of the Body, and Everlasting life. What then, are our Temptations greater than theirs? The Confidence of the most sensual Sinner, dares not arrive at this Plea: Let the Voluptuary, the Ambitious confront his Temptations with the Enjoyments or the Hopes of *Moses*: Let the most afflicted, miserable Man ballance his Temptations with *Abraham's* Sacrifice

of his Son, or with the Sufferings of those Righteous Men mentioned in the latter part of this Chapter, and he must confess, that his Temptations are as much weaker than theirs, as is his Faith. What then can be said? Nothing, unless plainly this, that our Case is not the same with theirs either in respect of our Inclinations or our Assistances: If this were so, then how could these Men stand as a Cloud of Witnesses against us in the last Day? Which St. *Paul* intimates in the beginning of the following Chapter: How natural would it be for us, to wipe off any Accusation or Reproach which their Vertue could fasten upon us by this easie answer? 'Tis true we were foil'd and o'rethrown by those Temptations which these Men conquered, and well might this happen, for neither had they our Infirmities, nor we their Grace; their Nature was not so depraved as ours, nor our Grace so sufficient as theirs. Were this so, the Sinner might be more unfortunate, but not more Criminal than the Saint; the different Event of things at the last Day were to be imputed to the different Dispensation, not different Use of Grace, *i. e.* to the partiality of God, not the

negligence or wilfulneſs of Man, than which nothing can be more impiouſly or abſurdly affirm'd.

And now, let not hereafter a fancied Impoſſibility of Vertue diſcourage the Weak, nor a pretended one excuſe the Wilful; nothing is more Evident than that there is no Inclination in Man that is Incorrigible, nor any temptation incident to our State which is Inſuperable: Let any Man that pretends the contrary conſider what Reaſon has done in ſome, what Cuſtom, what Faith, in others; Let him himſelf try, what Reaſon, what Diſcipline, what Faith, (from all which I never ſeparate Divine Aſſiſtance) can do in him, and I am Confident, he will not then ſtand in need of any further anſwer to his Objection; his own ſucceſs as well as that of others, will be a ſufficient proof of it's weakneſs: Thus I think I have in general given a ſatisfactory anſwer to as many at leaſt as plead Natural Incapacity againſt the Poſſibility of being Happy; however that no Diſcouragement, no ſcruple may remain, I will give a particular and cleat tho brief Anſwer to each part of this Objection.

There

The force of inclination examined.

There are three things supposed by it to render Man naturally incapable of Vertue and Happiness. *First*, Violent and invincible Inclinations to Vice: Against this, as the most considerable Part of the Objection, the whole bent and force of the precedent Discourse was levelled, and therefore this needs no further answer, only here it will be worth our remarking, That those differences that are in the Nature and Temper of Men are not Essential, but Accidental, and consequently they may make the way to Happiness more difficult to some than others, but impossible to none. The strongest Inclination to Vertue (I speak of that which is the result of Natural Temper) seems to me but a weaker Inclination to Vice, every Man has naturally a propension to pleasure, and consequently the sensitive Part of us to sensitive Pleasure; how much finer mould our first Parents were made of then we are, I know not; but this I find, the Desire of Pleasure was Natural to 'em even in Innocence: This was that which the Beauty of the Apple did easily enflame, and that was such a Degree, that I am not able to discern by the Text, to which I should rather impute

pute their Sin and their loss of Paradise, to the Desire of Knowledge, or the Desire of Pleasure: This tendency of the Sensitive Part is Natural to all, but in some tis more, in some less violent; unless we may lay upon one ground, tis equal in all, for the difference of Temper discovers it self rather in the different kinds of Pleasure we pursue, then in the different degrees of our Inclination to it; we are all equally allured and drawn, yet not by the same but several Objects, so that if Lust prevail in one, Ambition as much prevails in another, and Covetousness in a third, and in others Intemperance or Sloth: So that the difficulty of Vertue seems much the same to all the Sons of *Adam*, the strength of Temptation consisting especially in our weakness; not in the Excellency of the Object we are taken with, but in our inclination to it. Hence is it as Difficult for one Man to overcome his Covetousness, as to another to overcome his Lust; and restless to some Ambition is as luscious and raising with some tempers, as lazy and delicious Luxury with others: If this were well weighed, it would make us more mild and gentle in our Censure of others, and

not

not ſo ſoft and eaſy in excuſing our ſelves. 'Tis further worth our obſerving here, that every Man's Vertue derives ſome tincture from his Conſtitution and Temper, ſo that generally ſpeaking, 'tis not difficult to gueſs a Man's Natural Conſtitution by the Complection of his Religion; however Vertue ceaſes not to be Vertue; nor will that ſlight Allay of the Natural Conſtitution extinguiſh it's Vigour and Merrit, tho it behoves every Man to keep a ſtrict and jealous guard upon his Inclinations, for Nature ſoon revives even after it has been ſome time Buried, and to labour moſt after that Perfection which does moſt contradict and oppoſe the particular Vice of his Conſtitution; for it will be otherwiſe morally impoſſible to gain a Conqueſt over it, and as impoſſible to gain a Rational Peace and Security without this Conqueſt.

Dulneſs implies not an incapacity of Happineſs.

A *Second* thing which is ſuppoſed in the Objection to incapacitate Man for Happineſs is an unteachable ſtupidity conſiſting in a ſlow Conception and treacherous Memory; 'Tis true indeed the Heathen Philoſophers did require in their Scholars the Knowledge of many abſtruſe and difficult Matters, as antecedently

tecedently neceſſary to Vertue and Happineſs, Skill in Mathematicks fitted a Man for the *Platonick* Philoſophy, and the Knowledge of Natural things was the Foundation on which the *Epicuræan* pretended his Divine Happineſs and Vertue was to be built; and *Seneca* reckons the unthinking Croud amongſt the Beaſts that Periſh: All of them did with one conſent require three things to Compleat a Vertuous and Happy Man; Nature, Education or Inſtruction, and Cuſtome. To the *Firſt*, they attributed the Diſpoſition to Vertue; To the *Second* the Beginning; To the *Third*, the Eaſineſs and Conſtancy; and to all three together the Perfection of it. And hence it is that they did diſtinguiſh between Perfect and Imperfect, between Political or Social and Philoſophical Vertue, and did not deem every Nature Capable of that Vertue which was perfect and Philoſophical. But our bleſſed Lord and Maſter the Author of the Chriſtian Philoſophy requires no ſuch qualifications in thoſe who will be his Diſciples; All that he requires, is, an humble and an honeſt Mind, freed from proud prejudices, poſſeſſed with a ſincere Love of the Truth, and a ſincere Reſolution

Resolution of obeying it; accordingly St. *Paul* observes that such were most wrought upon by the Preaching of the Gospel: 1 Cor. 1. *Ye see your calling Brethren, how that not many wise Men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; But God has chosen the Foolish things of the world to confound the wise: And God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: And base things of the World, and things that are despised has God chosen.* Nor will any one imagine that Acute and Eminent parts are necessary to render a Man capable of being a Christian, who shall consider the Brevity and Plainness of the Christian Faith and Law: Doth it require a deep and penetrating Judgment, or a firm and tenacious Memory, to enable us to understand or remember that plain and short Summary of Christian Practice? The Grace of God Titus 2. *teacheth us to deny all ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and live Righteously, Soberly and Godlily in this present World?* or that as brief and perspicuous Abridgment of the Christian Faith? John 17. *This is life Eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent:* or that excellent Abridgment of both by St.

St. *Paul*; *Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* 'Tis true all things are now ravelled and entangled, and the Faith and Vertue of Chriſtianity is not half ſo Conſpicuous amongſt Chriſtians as their Theological Wars, Tumults and Factions; But this is owing to Man not to the Goſpel, to the Pride and Superſtition of the one, not to the Obſcurity of the other: Nor may any one here with any ſhew of Reaſon object, That tho the ſubſtance of the Chriſtian Faith and Practice is clear, yet the Reaſons of both are not ſo; for who can ever imagine ſuch a Stupidity of Nature as can diſable any one to underſtand the Proofs by which the Scripture eſtabliſhes the great Fundamental Article of our Faith, That *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt*, the *Meſſias* or *Mediator* between God and Man? Or what Stupidity of Nature can render it an impoſſible Task to us to comprehend the two Fundamental Reaſons of Evangelical Righteouſneſs, namely, the Subſerviency of it to the Happineſs of this, and of another Life, and the Holineſs of the God we Worſhip? I do not write this as if I meant hereby to repreſent Induſtry in ſearch of Divine Truths, as ſu- Acts 20.

ſuperfluous and unneceſſary; but to aſſure all of how mean Capacities ſoever, of the ſucceſs of it. I am not Ignorant how much ſome applaud themſelves on the account of acquir'd Knowledge of doubtful or abſtruſe things; how much others value themſelves on a peculiar ſort of Politicks remote enough indeed from Vertue; and others on Accompliſhments as remote from Reaſon, as the other Politicks from Vertue; and how much all of them do deſpiſe the dulneſs of thoſe who cannot, and the ſimplicity of thoſe who ſtrive not to equal 'em in theſe Attainments: But all this doth not beget in me the leaſt Scruple or Suſpition of the Truth I have before aſſerted; I know that our Duty is plain, and that the Path of Duty is the moſt Direct and Compendious one to the Happineſs of this Life and of another: For I know that nothing is ſo taking with God as an humble Faith, Devout, Pure, Peaceable and Charitable Religion. As to worldly Happineſs I know that a Man's own Vertue ſupported by God's Spirit, and guided by his Truth is the ſafeſt and the plaineſt Guide he can follow in Dark and Tempeſtuous times; true Policy conſiſts not

not in that Addreſs or ſubtilty of Spirit, which furniſhes a Man at all times with plauſible Shifts, but in that Integrity and Vertue that needs none: And the Beauty and Life of Converſation conſiſts not in Artificial Faces, Phantaſtick Dreſſes, Mechanick Motions, Shrugs and Cringes, much leſs in Mechanick (for ſo I may call ſet forms of) Chat but in an humble, diligent and faithful diſcharge of the Duties we owe to all thoſe ſeveral Relations we ſtand in, and the obſervance of thoſe Laws of Converſation which true Philoſophy preſcribes: This is that which will make us acceptable to all, and dear to the wiſe and Good; Slights and Tricks, and Arts may divert and entertain, but Vertues do charm and captivate; thoſe may open us the way to mens Houſes and their Tables, but theſe to their Boſoms, to their Hearts. The ſum of all is, Great Endowments of Nature ſeem to be Neceſſary for the Attainment of Unneceſſary Accompliſhments, common Endowments are ſufficient to make us capable of Vertue and Happineſs, this *Marcus Antoninus* had well obſerved, and has as well expreſſed in ſeveral places, more

ὅτι ἐν ὀλιγίστοις κεῖται τὸ εὐδαιμόνως βιῶσαι, καὶ μὴ ὅτι ἀπήλπισας διαλεκτικὸς καὶ φυσικὸς ἔσεσθαι, διὰ τοῦτο ἀπογνῶς καὶ ἐλεύθερος καὶ αἰδήμων, καὶ κοινονικὸς καὶ εὐπειθὴς Θεῷ. Marc. Ant. lib. 7. Sect. 41.

fully, *Lib.* 5. *Sect.* 3. more briefly elsewhere thus, *Tho thou despairest of being a Logician, a Naturalist, a Mathematician, a Courtier, a State-Empirick, a Talkative Bigot, or a Mimical Fop,* (for these too pass for Accomplishments with some) *yet despair not of becoming a Wise man and a Philosopher; tho thou hast not Abilities big enough to make thy Confidence pass for Wit and Demonstration, tho thou hast not the Art of Wheedling, nor the Talent of shifting and deluding, tho thou hast no faculty for deep dissimulation nor slight Insinuation, tho thy parts lye below all these and a great many other Perfections, yet for all this despair not, thou hast parts sufficient to make thee Happy, thou may'st be free* (Redeemed from the Servitude of Vice) *Modest, Humble, Charitable, and Obsequious to God, and in these very few things consists* τὸ εὐδαιμόνως βιῶσαι, *The Blessedness of Life.*

Likeness & Inconsiderateness examined.

A *Third* thing wherein the Objection supposes Natural Incapacity to consist, is such a slightness, levity, and in-

inconſtancy of Temper as ſeems to render Men neither fit for any cloſe Appplication, nor ſuſceptible of any deep and laſting Impreſſion: It cannot be denied but that ſome are of ſuch an airy, volatile, and various Temper that they ſeem to be deſigned for nothing ſerious, nothing great, as if like Flowers they were the Sport not Work of Nature, made not for Uſe but Ornament: But I have always obſerved that Nature makes up defects of one kind by Advantages of another; Thus it happens here, thoſe Conſtitutions which do moſt want ſolidity and ſtrength, do moſt partake of Softneſs and Tenderneſs; ſo that they are as much more apt to receive Impreſſions, as they are more unapt to retain them than others, like yielding air which the gentleſt ſtroak doth as eaſily divide and part, as it doth eaſily return and unite it ſelf again. Hence 'tis generally obſerved, that that Age and that Sex which are ſuppoſed to have leaſt of fixtneſs and conſtancy, have moſt of Heat and Paſſion in Religion, and thoſe Minds which are worſt furniſh'd with Courage and Experience, with Judgment and Reſolution, are moſt apt and

easie to be moved and wrought upon by Religious, or deluded by Superstitious Fears; and as apt to be tenderly affected by the Representations of Divine Goodness and Compassion; so that like Bodies which have less bulk, but more agility, their Motions nimbler, tho their force and strength be less. Now if this be so, then the Disadvantage of this Temper is not so great as it is fancied, for tho their Passions last not long, they are easily rais'd; and consequently, if our Addresses to such a Temper be but a little more frequently repeated, they cannot but prove successful, and such Persons by the frequent Returns of Holy Passions will grow habitually devout, and their Devotion will be as steady and more elevated than that of a slower and firmer Constitution: But after all whereever there appears an Exuberancy of this Humour, this is to be imputed rather to their Fortune than their Nature; a wanton Fortune and too indulgent an Education is generally attended with a gay, wanton and unfix'd Mind. And 'tis true that it is a difficult Matter for such Minds as these to attain to Wisdom and Vertue, but 'tis not because they

they cannot conſider, but becauſe they will not; let but ſuch exchange their haunts of Pleaſure for the houſe of Mourning; let 'em but now and then intermix the Converſation of the wiſe and ſerious with that of the giddy, fanciful, and frolickſome; and they will ſoon find their Humour much corrected, and their Minds better fix'd; to all this, if they could be perſwaded to add the Contemplation of a ſuffering Saviour, of a Holy God, and of a Judgment to come: And to this the Devotion of the Cloſet made up of ſerious Reflection on theſe Subjects and their own Eternity; this would ſoon reduce their looſe and ſcatter'd Deſires, it would ſoon recal the roving wandring Mind, and make it delight to dwell at home in the Company of Wiſe, Devout and Important Thoughts.

And now, I think, I have left no part of this Objection founded upon Natural Incapacity unconſidered. Do Men complain of their heavineſs and ſtupidity? Acute Parts and a tenacious Memory are not neceſſary to make us Vertuous or Happy: Do they complain of their violent Inclinations to Sin? I have ſhewed them Reaſon, Cuſtom,

Faith, curbing and ſubduing the moſt Natural or the moſt outragious and ungovernable Appetites of Man: Do they Complain of the Levity and Inconſtancy of their Temper? Let 'em retire from the Flatteries and Careſſes of a wanton Fortune, and a wanton Converſation; let 'em acquaint themſelves with the Wiſe or the Afflicted, with Divine Truths and their Cloſets, and this will ſoon work a Happy change upon them: If they are too ſoft and delicate for the bitterneſs and ſeverity of theſe Preſcriptions, nothing but the much ſeverer Diſcipline of Afflictions and Judgments can effect their Cure.

2. *Of Moral incapacity.* Under this Head of Natural Incapacity that other Objection from Moral Incapacity has been ſufficiently anſwer'd, for Cuſtom is at moſt but a ſecond Nature; and I have at large diſcourſed of the Power of Reaſon and Faith over Nature; I have produced many and unqueſtionable Inſtances, wherein we have ſeen them overcome our moſt natural and moſt neceſſary Appetites, ſuch as are, our Averſion to Pain, our love of Life, and ſuch like. Nor is it poſſible that any vitious Cuſtom ſhould have taken deeper Root in us, or united them-

themſelves more cloſely with our very Beings than theſe, and therefore it were abſurd to fancy them more violent, ſtubborn, or inſuperable; that Expreſſion of the Prophet; *Can the Ethiopian change his skin? Or the Leopard his ſpots? Then may ye alſo learn to do Good, who are accuſtomed to do Evil*; is but a Pathetick Exaggeration (which is uſual in a Prophetick ſtile) of the Difficulty, not an Aſſertion of the Impoſſibility of an habitual Sinner's Change; what has been done, and daily is done can be done, and 'tis in vain to prove what no Man can deny; St. *Paul* when he had recited a Catalogue of ſuch Sinners as ſhould not enter into the Kingdom of God, doth afterwards add, and *ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.* And *Tertullian* does appeal to the Power and Efficacy of the Chriſtian Religion viſible in the Extirpation of vicious Habits wrought by it, as a proof of it's Divine Original; nor are ſuch Inſtances as theſe wanting this Day. Theſe, as they do now refute all the Idle Excuſes of Sinners, ſo will they one day be urged in Judgment a-

Jer. 13.

1 Cor. 6.

againſt them to convince them that they owe their Ruine to their ſloath and obſtinacy, not their Impotence; tho theſe Men ought to remember too, that Moral Impotence is ever derived from a voluntary Neglect or Contempt of all the Means of Happineſs and Vertue: I think I might now diſmiſs this Objection, having given full ſatisfaction to all ſcruples that might diſturb or diſcourage any well-meaning and honeſt Mind: and evidently defeated the Pretences of ſuch as would fain ſhroud and ſhelter their voluntary Sin and Folly under the feigned Excuſes of Impotence, Incapacity and inſupportable Infirmity or inſuperable Temptations: for all theſe are mixed and combined in every part of the former Objection, and receive one and the ſame Anſwer. But I foreſee, I ſhall be thought in this whole Diſcourſe to have had too little regard to our Original Corruption and Divine Aſſiſtance; and therefore tho I endeavour'd to guard it in the beginning againſt all ſiniſter Interpretation, I will here add a brief account of both; eſpecially as far as it ſhall appear to me to concern my preſent Enquiry.

Firſt,

Firſt, As to the Natural Corruption of Man, if Corruption may be called Natural, on the account of the Tendency of our ſenſitive Inclinations; ſome things are very plain, ſome very obſcure; what is plain is this, what the preſent ſtate of Man is with reſpect to that Righteouſneſs which the Goſpel requires; what is obſcure is this, what the ſtate of *Adam* before the Fall was; without a clear Knowledge of which 'tis impoſſible to determine how much our Nature is now degenerated (as is ſuppoſed) from the Primitive Purity and Excellency of its Creation. *Secondly*, how Guilt and Corruption could be tranſmitted or derived from *Adam* upon his Poſterity; *Thirdly*, What can be ſuppoſed properly ſpeaking to be the Demerit, Offence, or Provocation of Original Corruption; what Puniſhment can be due to it; divided and ſeperated from Voluntary Tranſgreſſions: Theſe and a great many things of the like Nature I purpoſely paſs over, as either of no great Importance in themſelves, or at leaſtwiſe of no great Uſe to my preſent Enquiry, and go on to what is Plain and Neceſſary, and that is, what the preſent State and Condition

The Corruption of Nature Conſidered.

Condition of Humane Nature is, for nothing can be more Evident than *that the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh*; These two being contrary one to another in their Tendencies and Inclinations: This Conflict or Opposition of Spirit and Body discovers it self the more, the more pure and perfect the Law is, that we are under: This tendency of the Body is so apparent and undeniable, that it was ever acknowledged by all Wise Heathens. Hence the *Platonicks* frequently impute the Diminution of the Power and Liberty of the Soul of Man to it's Conjunction with the Body; and hence it was that some of them whom St. *Austin* refutes by giving an Account of the Nature of the raised Body, rejected the Christian Doctrine of the Resurrection, judging the restitution of the Body, rather a diminution of, than accession to, the Happiness of the Mind. The *Pythagoreans* looked upon the Body as the Prison and the Punishment of the Soul, and in short the Philosophy of the Heathens did consist chiefly in this, the subduing the Appetites of the Body to the Reason of the Mind; and this appears most plainly to be the

Gal. 5.

Plotinus Ennead. 1. lib. 1. c. 9. Enn. 2. lib. 3. c. 15. Enn. 3. lib. 1. c. 8. Aug. de Civ. Dei.

Drift

Drift and Scope of Chriſtian Philoſophy; From whence it follows, that the Diſorder of Humane Nature (call it Original Corruption or what you pleaſe) conſiſts in the φρόνημα σαρκὸς, the Luſt and Concupiſcence of the Fleſh. This is Evident from all the Writings of St. *Paul*, eſpecially *Romans* the 7th, and this is the ſenſe of our Church *Art.* the 9th. Nor indeed are we Capable of Imagining any other Corruption in Man; for if there be a Conflict betwixt Right Reaſon and Carnal Appetite, if the Tendency of the Body and the Mind be oppoſite and contradictory, 'tis Nonſenſe to ſuppoſe both Corrupt and Sinful; for then the Contradiction and Conflict would ceaſe: From hence it follows plainly, that we are born with Capacities of, and Inclinations to, Vertue as well as Vice, tho nothing be more manifeſt then that the Appetite of the Body exerts it ſelf firſt, grows up to Strength and Maturity ſooneſt, and doth more powerfully and forcibly move than the Suggeſtions and Perſwaſions of Reaſon: *Secondly*, It is from hence plain, that a ſtate of Righteouſneſs conſiſts in the prevalency of the Mind over the Body, and a ſtate of

Sin

Divine Assistance or Grace Considered.

Sin in the prevalency of the Body over the Mind. And from hence appears the Neceſſity of Divine Grace or Aſſiſtance: for ſince the Dominion of Righteouſneſs cannot be Eſtabliſhed but in the ſubjection of the Body, and the Body doth in power ſo much o'rematch the Mind, the Appetites of it being both more forward, more violent, more conſtant, I had almoſt ſaid, more Natural, than the Dictates of Reaſon; and this Power receiving daily increaſe and augmentation by a ſenſual Education, and by a daily and unavoidable Commerce with the World, and thoſe Temptations which awaken, gratifie and enflame the Appetites of the Body, it were morally impoſſible that the Mind ſhould maſter and o'recome the Body if it were not aided by Divine Grace and Aſſiſtance; but then it muſt be remembred, that 'tis repugnant to the very Notion of Aid or Aſſiſtance, that it ſhould make void the Neceſſity of our own Endeavours: As the Light of Revelation doth not extinguiſh that of Reaſon but encreaſe it: ſo neither does the ſtrength of God's Grace render our Natural ſtrength uſeleſs, but improve and help it: This added to what I have

ſaid

ſaid before, compriſes all that is neceſſary to be known concerning Grace, and may be reduced to theſe three or four Heads. *Firſt*, That the Grace of God is neceſſary to enable us to live Vertuouſly and Happily; *Secondly*, That Grace does not extinguiſh Nature, or cancel our Obligation to Induſtry or a careful uſe of that Natural Power God has inveſted us with; *Thirdly*, That God is moſt ready and deſirous to further and aſſiſt all Men in their Endeavours after Vertue and Happineſs; And *Laſtly*, That the Grace of God is ſufficient for us, or that we receive by it as great an addition of Strength or Spiritual Aid, as being joyned with our ſincere Endeavours, is neceſſary to make us Vertuous and Happy: If we deny the firſt of theſe, we ſubvert the Foundation of Prayer to and dependence upon God, we can give no tolerable account of at leaſt one third part of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and we unavoidably diſcourage Mankind from all hopes of Happineſs; if we deny the ſecond, we deſtroy the very Nature of Man, render all Laws, Exhortations, Admonitions, Rewards and Puniſhments uſeleſs, ſilly and impertinent; and make Divine Grace

Grace the very foundation of carnal Security, of desperate and destructive Negligence and Sloth: If we deny the third or fourth, we must unavoidably affirm, either that the Happiness of Man does no way depend upon the Grace of God, or that his misery is fatal and unavoidable: All which are Absurdities gross and palpable to all Minds which lie not under the thickest darkness of blind Superstition and Prejudice. Whoever shall now reflect upon all that has been said will easily be able to conclude, that we have no Enemy without us, none within us that can necessitate and compel us to be miserable; Misery may be our Choice or Punishment, it can never be our Fate: Our natural Corruption may invite and incline us, but can never force and compel us to be wicked: For there is no Temptation, no Inclination, which God's Grace and our Industry are not able to resist and overcome; so that now there remains at last no other Incapacity of Happiness than what is *Penal*, which is the next thing to be spoke to.

Of Penal Incapacity. Penal Incapacity consists in God's final and immutable rejection of Man from Grace and Pardon. The matter of

of this Objection ſhall be fully handled, *Vol.* 4. where I ſhall be obliged to treat of the Troubles of the Mind, and their Cure; in the mean time, all that is Neceſſary to be obſerved here is, *Firſt*, That this ſtate of final Rejection from Grace and Pardon is *Penal*, a ſtate to which nothing but Men's voluntary Tranſgreſſions can betray 'em, and thoſe too Tranſgreſſions of the deepeſt guilt and moſt crying aggravations; for ſurely nothing leſs can provoke a God *who delights to exerciſe loving Kindneſs and Mercy*, a God of infinite long-Suffering and Patience, to paſs a Sentence, an irreverſible Sentence of eternal Ruine and Damnation upon any of his Creatures. *Secondly*, That no miſtaken Fancies of the Unpardonableneſs of our ſtate may either tempt us deſperately to renounce God, our Saviour, and Vertue; it behoves us to conſider what ought to be the proper Influence of this Perſwaſion that there is ſuch a Penal ſtate on this ſide the Grave.

Firſt, If they who believe ſuch a ſtate will act conſonant to their own Opinion, they muſt not allow themſelves in a courſe of wilful Sin, leſt they be inſenſibly betray'd into that dreadful ſtate.

Se-

ſenſibly betray'd into that dreadful ſtate.

Secondly, Since Impenitence and Hardneſs of Heart is a Neceſſary and inſeparable Conſequence of that dreadful Sentence which excludes Men from Grace and Pardon; therefore no Man can rationally conclude himſelf in this ſtate till he has made all poſſible attempts to recover himſelf from his Sin, and that without ſucceſs; And becauſe,

Laſtly, No Man can conclude his Endeavours unſucceſsful, till Death ſurpriſe him in an Obdurate and Impenitent ſtate; for habitual Sinners have become eminent Saints, and laps'd Chriſtians, nay Apoſtates have not only recover'd their former ſtate, but redeemed their Crimes by more than Ordinary degrees of Repentance, Devotion and Charity, and by undeniable Conſequence have been reſtored to God's Favour; for Grace is in order to Pardon, Sanctification in order to Juſtification, Vertue in order to Glory; therefore no Man muſt give over his Attempts of appeaſing God, and ſubduing his Corruptions, while God continues him in the Land of the Living: Theſe Rules if obſerved, will, I queſtion not, render the Perſwaſion of ſuch a *Penal* ſtate, as the Objection ſuppoſes, very profitable and uſeful to ſome and not per-

pernicious to the eternal Intereſt of any: For he who by the dread of ſuch a ſtate, is deterr'd from bold and provoking Sins, and from an habitual Courſe of wilful Impiety, reaps an unſpeakable Advantage by it; and he who adheres to Religion and Vertue, and continues to his life's End, ſincerely endeavouring to pleaſe God and obtain his Pardon, ſhall never ſuffer any prejudice in another life by his melancholy and miſtaken Fancies in this.

Having thus cleared my Aſſertion, That Happineſs is attainable here, from ſuch Objections as ſeem to derive any Countenance or Strength from Reaſon, there remains but two more that I can think of, the one whereof preſſes hard upon me, under a pretended Authority of Revelation, the other urges the Experience of Mankind againſt me: I will begin with the former, and conſider with what aſpect Revelation regards the Happineſs of this preſent life, and whether there be any thing in it that forbids the Hopes, or obſtructs the Attainments of it.

CHAP. VII.

CHAP. VII.

Religion no Enemy to our present Happiness.

Happiness the Fruit of Religion, proved by plain Texts, and the natural Influence of Faith and Virtue. The Doctrine of the Cross not inconsistent with Happiness; Nor that of Mortification.

IF Men were not very ingenious in framing Excuses of their Folly, and in the contrivance and pursuit of Ruine, it would seem very strange that the Gospel which was designed to be the great Instrument of our Happiness, should be alledged to discourage and damp our endeavours after it; that the Gospel whose great end is to fill our Minds with Joy, Peace and Hope, should be traduced as an Enemy to our Pleasure; but so it is, and therefore resolving to leave no obstacle unremoved, nor despise any Objection that has the least Colour or Appearance of an Argument in it, I will Examine this Fancy.

Religion

Religion ever had, and always muſt have the Character of its Author viſibly ſtamp'd upon it; nothing that is not infinitely kind and infinitely wiſe can be found in any part of Revelation truly Divine, from whence we may rationally conclude, that the great aim of God in the Eſtabliſhing Religion is to advance the Happineſs of Man, and to advance it in a Method conſonant to thoſe Natural Principles he has implanted in him: Nor did any one inſpir'd Author ever think otherwiſe; *He that keepeth the Law* (ſaith *Solomon*) *Happy is he.* Prov. 29. *Great Peace have they that Love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them:* Pſal. 119. *Happy is the Man that findeth Wiſdom, and the Man that getteth Underſtanding,* Prov. 3. That this was to be underſtood of actual and preſent Happineſs in this life is apparent from what follows a little after, *Length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand Riches and Honour. Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to thoſe that lay hold upon her.* And tho the Goſpel as a higher and more perfect Diſpenſation doth propoſe to us as our great and Chief End, Life, and Immortality, yet it doth by no means exclude

us from Happineſs here; but rather doth eſtabliſh it upon proper and firm Foundations; and fences it about with Impregnable Bulwarks. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the World gives, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Now the Fruit of the Spirit is joy, peace,* &c. *Now the God of Hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, and make you abound in Hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt. Godlineſs is profitable to all things, having promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Nor can I indeed conceive how the ſtate of a Righteous and Holy Soul ſhould be other than a Happy and Bleſſed one: The belief and confident Expectation of a Heaven muſt needs be more tranſporting and raviſhing then the richeſt Fancy of a Sinner, and that Security both in reſpect of this and a future Life, which a good Man enjoys in the Protection of God and the Aſſurance of his Favour, who is Almighty, Immutable, &c. muſt infinitely exceed any thing that a Sinner can attain to and muſt exclude thoſe uneaſie Fears which do frequently interrupt the Sinner's Enjoyment and o'recaſt his hopes:

John. 14. 27.
Gal. 5. 22.
Rom. 15.
1 Tim. 4. 8.

he

he that loves God and Vertue, cannot but be Happy in the daily Practice and Enjoyment of what he moſt delights in: And he, laſtly, that hath ſubdued his Paſſions and o'recome the World, cannot chooſe but reap the daily Fruits of ſo glorious a Conqueſt, and be conſtantly entertain'd with pleaſing Reflections and delightful Proſpects; and yet if he ſhould enjoy nothing elſe, that Soveraignty, Liberty, Magnanimity, and Divine Charity, and Enlargment of Soul which he thereby gains, were an abundant Reward of his Victory. The ſum of all is this, A good Man has the beſt Title to the Bleſſings of this Life, and the Glories of another; he enjoys this World with as great Security, as Wiſdom and Moderation, and has an aſſured hope of a far better when he quits this; the Anticipations of which by Faith, Love, and Hope, do at once facilitate and confirm his Conqueſt over all unworthy Luſts, and entertain him with unexpreſſible Satisfaction and Pleaſure.

For this Reaſon, I do in this Chapter diſcourſe of Happineſs without that immediate regard to another life, which might be expected: Not judging my ſelf oblig'd either to prove the Certainty of it, or to demonſtrate the Reaſona-

blesness of embracing Misery during the space of this short life, in Expectation of that Perfect and Eternal Happiness which is promised hereafter; since I saw well enough that in the ordinary course of Providence, the Happiness of this life and the other, were not incompatible: But on the Contrary, that that wherein the Life and Being of true Happiness in this World doth consist, was but a necessary Introduction to, or Qualification of us for the Happiness of another; which doth in some measure already appear, and will much more in the Progress of the following Discourses.

The Doctrine of the Cross no Obstruction of this life's Happiness, Matth. 16. 24.

But what becomes now of the Doctrine of the Cross? This is a very soft and mild Commentary upon that of our Saviour, *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me.* But this is not so formidable an Objection, as it may at first sight seem: 'tis true, Suffering through all the Progress and Stages of Evils even to the last, that is, Death it self, was so common, nay almost an Universal Duty in the beginning of Christianity, being indispensibly Necessary to the Propagation of the Gospel; but blessed be God, the Obligation of

that Duty has long ago ceased; And all that I can think necessary to be said here in pursuance of my design is, That the pleasures of those Confessors and Martyrs did far out-weigh their sufferings whil'st they lived; That when they suffer'd Death it self, the time was come when they must exchange Temporal for Eternal Happiness: Nor doth this at all infringe the Truth of my proposition, which doth not vainly assert an Eternal Duration of Happiness in this Life, but only teaches the possibility of attaining it. And I think the Death of Martyrs and Confessors, is rather a great Confirmation than Confutation of this Opinion: Teaching us plainly that in despight of all Calamities, 'tis not only possible to live, but to dye Happily; which last is no small accession to Temporal Happiness. From this little I have said on this Occasion, 'tis easie to shape an answer to what is Objected from St. *Paul*, *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all Men most miserable*; 'tis confessedly indisputably true, that had these Christians been destitute of that hope which was their support, they had sunk under the weight of such Sufferings, and

so had been the most miserable of all Men: But since their hopes did not only support 'em under their Afflictions, but also render them somewhat more than Conquerours; all that can follow hence is, That the Resurrection and Eternal life are unquestionable Truths, and that he who believes 'em as firmly as Confessors and Martyrs did, may like them be *Happy*, tho a Thousand Seas of Calamities and Troubles should break in upon him.

Mortification recommended by the Light of Nature as subservient to our present Happiness.

As to Mortification which is a Duty of perpetual Obligation, (for the Purity of Religion is still the same, tho its fortune in the World be altered) this did at first signifie the Renunciation and Extirpation of Jewish and Pagan Lusts according to that of St. *Paul*, *Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the Earth; Fornication, Uncleanness, Inordinate Affection, Evil Concupiscence, and Covetousness which is Idolatry*; and it still signifies the same thing, and whatever difficulty we are to encounter in the performance of this Duty, it must be vanquished, for 'tis impossible to be wicked and happy: A wicked Man is his own *Hell*, and every Passion, every Lust is a Fiend, a Fury that doth outrage and torment him; and all this the

Col. 3. 5.

Heathens

Heathens themselves did not only constantly acknowledge, but also paint out with as lively Eloquence as any Christian could ever do: Their Experience, (over whom Sin had an uncontrouled dominion) most effectually convincing 'em of the Outrages, Tyranny, and unspeakable Mischiefs of wicked and abominable Passions; Nay, so manifest is it that the subduing these Irregular Passions is necessary to our Happiness, that even the Epicureans themselves (notwithstanding their confining the Happiness of Man to this short life, and by a probable Consequence, resolving it ultimately into the Enjoyments of the Body) did yet look upon themselves as extreamly injur'd by *Tully*, and others, when they represented 'em as revolted from, and Enemies to Vertue. 'Tis not my business here to examine what foundation for Vertue their Philosophy could leave, or what rank and place they could assign it; 'tis enough that they could not but acknowlege it as necessary to Happiness.

'Tis true, Mortification in the Gospel sense, requires us not only to restrain these irregular Lusts, but also not to over-rate and over-value this World and the things of it; not to look upon this

life

life as our only or chief Portion, and doat upon it with fondness and passion; and I cannot think that this is any thing more than what is imply'd and included in the former Notion of Mortification: This Moderation of our Inclinations to the World, being a proper and necessary foundation of the former Abstinence; it being very Improbable that he who values and doats upon the World above all things, should refrain from irregular Pursuits and Enjoyments of it. Now even this Degree of Mortification, and the Necessity of it in order to Happiness was as clearly taught by the Wise Men amongst the Heathens, as by our Saviour and his Apostles, by those conducted by the light of Nature, as by these conducted by the Light of Revelation: And that together with the Discipline which promotes it, I mean the observation of great Abstinence from sensual Pleasures: No Monk or Anchoret can speak with a more glorious contempt of the World than a Stoick; but their flights who would allow the Body, the World, and the things of it, no place nor degree in the Number of Good things, are too daring and bold to lay any stress upon; but the Opinion of o-

ther

ther Philosophers who allow'd these their proper place and value, ought to be of weight with us, because they shew us plainly, That Mortification was ever thought by the Light of Nature subservient to our true Happiness. *Hierocles* in the beginning of his Divine Comments gives us a short but full account of the Pythagorean (and I may add Platonick) Philosophy in this Point. The substance of which is, *The business of Philosophy is to purifie the Soul of Man from sensual Lusts and inordinate Passions, and to transform it into the likeness and Image of God; This is that which it pursues by discovering to us Excellent Truths, and by recommending to us the practice of Excellent Vertues.* And this was that Philosophy which the best and acutest of the Heathens looked upon as the only way to Happiness; so far were they from judging it inconsistent and incompatible with it; nay, they deemed this very state of Vertue a state of more Exalted Hap-

Φιλοσοφία ἐστὶ ζωῆς ἀνθρωπίνης κάθαρσις, καὶ τελειότης· κάθαρσις μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς ὑλικῆς ἀλλογίας, καὶ τοῦ θνητοῦδος σώματος. τελειότης δὲ τῆς οἰκείας εὐζωΐας ἀνάληψις, πρὸς τὴν θείαν ὁμοίωσιν ἐπανάγουσα. ταῦτα δὲ πέφυκεν ἀρετὴ καὶ ἀλήθεια κάλιστα ἀπεργάζεσθαι· ἢ μὲν τὴν ἀμετρίαν τῶν παθῶν ὀξορίζουσα. ἢ δὲ τὸ θεῖον εἶδος, εὐφυῶς ἔχουσα, προσκτωμένη.

Happiness, and an Image of the Divine Life: Hence is that little less than Inspir'd Heat or Rapture of *Tully*, When the Soul having discovered and entertained Vertue has extinguished its fondness for, and indulgence of, the Body, and stifled Lust as the Reproach and Stain of it's Honour and Beauty, and hath put off all dread of Death and Pain, &c. What can be said, or as much as fancied, more blessed than the state of such a Man? Nay, after all, the greatest Patrons and Abettors of Pleasure did ever acknowledge this moderation in our Passions and Enjoyments indispensibly Necessary to our Happiness.

Cum animus cognitis perceptisque virtutibus à Corporis obsequio, indulgentiaque discesserit, voluptatemque sicut lubem decoris oppresserit, omnemque mortis dolorisque timorem effugerit, Societatemque Charitatis coierit cum suis, omnesque natura conjunctos suos duxerit, Cultumque Deorum & puram Religionem susceperit, & exacuerit illam, ut oculorum sit Ingenii Aciem ad bona diligenda & rejicienda Contraria. Quid eo dici aut excogitari poterit beatius? Lib. 2. de Leg.

Hor. *Nil admirari prope res est una Numici,*
Solaq; quæ possit facere ac servare beatos.

Nought to admire's the thing alone that can
Cause and preserve the Happiness of Man.

And

And 'tis well known how much the followers of *Epicurus* gloried in his Abſtinence: That theſe Voluptuaries ſhould preſcribe and practiſe the Doctrine of Mortification! but this they were compelled to by the irreſiſtible force of Reaſon; for how can he who doats upon the World, and melts in ſoft and ſenſual Pleaſures, be able to ſecure the repoſe of his Mind againſt thoſe melancholy Alterations which may daily and ſome time or other will certainly befal himſelf and his Enjoyments? On what foundation can the Peace or Liberty of his Mind be Eſtabliſhed? Or can he be happy who is diſtreſſed by every change of Weather, and is divided and diſtracted between numerous, contrary Paſſions, and a ſlave to each?

To come to a Concluſion, the Scripture is ſo far from denying, that it do's affirm the poſſibility of attaining Happineſs; nor are the Sufferings of Confeſſors and Martyrs, or the Doctrine of Mortification any prejudice to this Aſſertion; for neither Affliction nor Mortification are inconſiſtent with the true Happineſs of Man: That Affliction is not, the Example of thoſe very Martyrs and Confeſſors triumphing over it do's

do's ſufficiently evince? That Mortification is not, is unanimouſly confeſs'd by the Suffrages of ſuch as were conducted by the Light of Nature, and of ſuch too as were entirely devoted to the pleaſures of this Life, and that upon undeniable Grounds. I have now ſpoke to all thoſe Objections which ſeem to oppoſe and aſſault my Poſition of the Poſſibility of Attaining Happineſs, with any ſhew of Reaſon, or pretence of Divine Authority; It is now high time I ſhould proceed to Anſwer thoſe who againſt this Aſſertion oppoſe not Reaſons and Arguments, but Obſervation and Experience.

CHAP. VIII.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Matter of Fact or Experience.

The ſtate of the Poor. The Gay and Silly. The Buſie. Princes. The Learned, whether Happy. The Happineſs of the Devout Queſtioned, and Demonſtrated by Inſtances.

AFter all the Pains I have taken in the Firſt Section to demonſtrate that the purſuit and ſearch after Happineſs is a rational Undertaking, an Employment becoming the nature and ſtate of Man: And after all that I have taken in this ſecond to demonſtrate the Poſſibility of attaining it, and to diſperſe all Objections to the contrary, there remains ſtill one Objection, which if true, were ſufficient to diſcourage the Endeavours and chill the heat of the moſt Vertuous and Reſolved Ambition. Which is this,

'Tis true, Happineſs may be found in Speculation, but rarely if ever in Poſſeſſion and Fruition: The Number of the Fortunate and Happy is extreamly ſmall; and

and moſt Men, if not all, when they have worn life to it's laſt Period, may give that account of it which the Aged (and as others no doubt thought Happy) Patriarch
Gen. 47. did of his to *Pharaoh*, *Few and Evil have the Days of the Years of my life been.* But it moves me not ſo much to hear this from the mouth of a Shepherd who from his Youth led a laborious and unſettled life: But when I read the mournful Poems of *Job*, the Diſcontents and Melancholy of *Solomon*, Men no leſs Eminent for Wiſdom and Philoſophy than for their Worldly Glory and Proſperity: When I read them bewailing the Lot of Mankind, unable to reflect upon it without a mixture of Indignation, Contempt and Womaniſh Sorrow, I cannot but acknowledge that I am ſhrewdly tempted to deſpair of Happineſs as of ſomething too great and Divine to make its abode upon Earth, and to look upon all the fine Diſcourſes that Men make of it only as ſo many flights of a bold fancy. Happineſs! What is it? Or where is it? In what diſtant Coaſts or unknown Regions do's it dwell? Who and where are the Fortunate? Who and where are the darlings of Heaven to whoſe Lot it happens? Shall we like *Bajazet* in a melancholy Humour think

Poor,

Poor, Silly, Lazy Peaſants Happy? O *Happy Shepherd who hadſt neither* Sebeſtia *nor* Orthobales *to loſe*: As if ſecure Baggary and ſlothful want were Happineſs; happy thus might I call the Man born Blind, he has no Eyes to loſe. Knowl's *Turkiſh Hiſt.* *Poor whether Happy.*

Or ſhall we call the gaudy ſwarm which (like Flies and Inſects in Gleams of Sunſhine) do buzze and flutter in the Rays and Warmth of Greatneſs and Proſperity? Shall we call theſe Happy? Ah! Theſe are they that furniſh Theatres and Poets with Tragick Stories: amongſt theſe, Reſtleſs Paſſions, Contemptible Levity, ungovernable Inſolence, wither'd and meagre Envy, wandring Luſt, Empty Pride, Loud and Senſeleſs Confidence, and finally ſhameful and fearful Sins have their abode: And can we call thoſe Happy who are infeſted with ſuch Legions of Evils? *Miſerere tu felicium*, they are their own burden whil'ſt they are other's Envy. *The Gay & Silly whether Happy.*

Shall we then call the buſie trading World Happy? Alas! Theſe would have thought it a Happineſs not to have needed to trade or toil, they love Wealth, but moſt admire *The Buſie whether Happy.*

Res non parta labore ſed relicta, Martial

Not Gold they labouring dig themſelves in Mines,
But what the toiling Anceſtor reſigns
To his more Happy Iſſue.

Princes whether Happy.

If this be ſo, one would think I might boldly preſent you with the envyed Glory of mighty Princes, as an unqueſtionable Inſtance of Happineſs: But alas! The wiſeſt of the Heathen Gods perferr'd the Happineſs of *Aglaus Sophydius* before that of *Gyges!* And the wiſeſt of Men (in his times at leaſt) preferr'd the Happineſs of *Tellus* before that of *Cræſus!* And this Sentence ſeems not only to deny thoſe particular Princes Happy, but alſo to pronounce the very ſtate of Royalty uncapable of Happineſs, or at leaſt leſs capable than that of a Plough-man; indeed this ſtate when active and glorious is full of Fears, and Cares, and Hazards; when ſluggiſh and unactive full of Shame; what can be the Happineſs of a ſtate too big for Friendſhip or for Pleaſure? For love is the Buſineſs and Enjoyment of Equals; Obedience is all Subjects can offer, or indeed Monarchs can receive: All higher and nearer approaches to the Throne are but intruſions of Ambition and deſign; nor can I poſſibly diſcern what Satisfaction the great Mortal can take in any Expreſſions of

of Duty or Affection, which he can never diſtinguiſh from the fawning and flattery of thoſe who in their hearts deſpiſe and hate him: How ſhall he know that any truly love him, when none dare ſlight him? Or how ſhall he diſcern who ſerves him out of Duty, where every Man even obtrudes himſelf upon his Commands out of Intereſt? In a word, the Paſſions of a Prince are ſo much greater than other Men's, as is his Mind and Fortune; his Converſation is not with the Minds of Men, but with Faces, or rather Masks and Diſguiſes. And as to his Pleaſures, his guſt of 'em is very flat, being cloy'd and ſurfeited by his Affluence. And whereas all other Men, as the Ambitious, the Vain-glorious, the Covetous, the Lover ſeem to aſcend and riſe above themſelves in the Acquiſitions of thoſe Pleaſures they aſpire to; the Monarch debaſes himſelf, deſcends and ſtoops below his Fortune to meet *his*. And yet I am not of *Apollo's* nor *Solon's* Mind, I cannot think there is any great Happineſs in the Ignorance and the Quietneſs of a labouring Cottager, ſuch as *Tellus* or *Aglaus Sophydius*; I love Security, but not that which Contempt breeds, I would have my Security owing not to the Littleneſs of my Fortune, but the greateſs of my Mind:

I love a Quiet but a Philoſophical Life, I would have my Tranquillity ſpring not from the Ignorance but Reaſon of my Mind; from the Right Government of my Paſſions, not from the meanneſs of my Education or Fortune. For the ſame Reaſon I do not call Men happy, whoſe ſlow and eaſie Temper, like the waters of the Dead Sea, is not to be mov'd even by Wind and Storm: I do not call Stupidity a Calm, the Soul that is inſenſible of Trouble, is ſo of Joy too; whoever is incapable of any deep Impreſſion, is ſo of any ſerious Reflection too, and what is the ſtate of ſuch a Man? I would not have my Life paſs by like a dream, whilſt fleeting or imperfect Images of things do ſcarce awake, and too too ſlightly affect my drouzy or dazled Senſe. In a word, the Happineſs I ſeek after is ſuch a one which is owing neither to Natural Conſtitution, nor to Fortune: For then, it would not be in our Power.

The Learned whether Happy.

Whom then ſhall we call Happy? Surely if any, the Knowing and Learned: Theſe are the Souls that converſe with Heaven, that dwell continually in the pure Light, and feed upon the Bread, the Joys of Angels. But alas, if Happineſs were the inſeparable Companion of Learning, how came the Stoick's ador'd *Cato* to be led by

Pride and Humour and Vain-glory through burning Sands and dreadful Deſarts? How came he in a mood of deſperate diſcontent to dye his own Murderer? Whence was it that the Learned and Eloquent *Tully* after ſo many brave Diſcourſes of the Contempt of Death and Pain, and briefly all humane Evils; did ſink ſo poorly under the weight of his Misfortunes? Whence was it that after he had taught the Soul's Immortality, and it's Tranſlation into ſome glorious Star, he ſhould at laſt be ſo unwilling to let it leave this vile Clod of Earth, and the Decay'd, Melancholy and Darkſom Manſion of the Body? If Learning did put Men in poſſeſſion of Happineſs, why was our *Raleigh* ſo uneaſie, ſo unfortunate, not more toſs'd by a reſtleſs Fortune than a reſtleſs Mind? Why was our *Verulam* ſo utterly a Stranger to Happineſs in both Fortunes, as unable to govern and enjoy Proſperity aright as to bear up under Adverſity? If Learning were ſo Soveraign an Antidote againſt Miſery, if Philoſophy were ſuch a Paradiſe, and Speculations were ſuch luſcious Meals, the very fruits of the Garden; why do the Learned leave their Sacred ſhades to haunt the Houſes of great ones, or the Courts of Princes? Why do they fawn and cringe, and with all imagi-

nable assiduity and artifice labour to insinuate themselves into such Men whose Esteem for them is a just Scandal to them, and their Favours but so many publick marks of Reproach? O vilest sort of Servitude! Can it consist with the Grandeur of a Philosopher, with the true Liberty of a Christian Spirit to dacquey some Favorite of Fortunes, and for many years together with an obstinate Stupidity digest the Capricios of his Humour, and not only dissemble his Vices, but magnifie even his Vanity and Folly? And not this only, but there are slavish Arts of Insinuation to be practised upon every one that's near him: O glorious Merit! When the same thing recommends the Philosopher that doth the *Valet de Chambre*, or the Footman! And yet after all, even this equals not the baseness, the slavery of those who prostitute Philosophy and themselves to the Multitude, and make an Ignorant and Insolent Herd the Arbitrary Soveraigns of their Principles, their Liberty, their Happiness, for this depends upon their Popularity. O how far should I prefer the humble contented and independent drudgery of an honest Mind, before this unmanly Servitude! How far shou'd I prefer the generous and undesigning freedom and unconcernment

concernment of a Poet (whatever Ignorance or Contempt of Intereſt it may be traduced for) before the former ſort of ſervile Philoſophic Proggers!

The Happineſs of the Devout queſtioned.

And now there remains no place where Happineſs can as much as be ſuſpected to dwell, unleſs among the Devout and Religious. These ſure live in Raptures and Transfigurations on the Mount, theſe ſure have their Converſation in Heaven, and from thence derive Glory, and Liberty, and Joy, and Peace and Hope, theſe are Partakers of Divine Nature, how can they therefore be deſtitute of a Divine Happineſs? But alas! Behold the Bleſſed Jeſus, and we ſhall find him as the Pſalmiſt and the Prophets repreſent him, *A man of ſorrow, and acquainted with grief.* Hear again the moſt Zealous and the moſt Elevated of our Divine Maſter's Diſciples, *If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all Men the moſt miſerable.* 1 Cor. 15. 19.

O Happineſs!

Thou Bleſſed State or rather pleaſing ſound,
Thou always ſought and never to be found!
In what Grot, do'ſt thou, or what Cell,
Or in what Court or Temple dwell?

Where and what art thou? Art thou merely Name,
No otherwiſe known than by Reports and Fame?
Art a Reality? Or art thou juſt
Like publick Good and publick Truſt,
A ſolemn, ſacred, but deceitful Notion?

Obj. anſwered. But to return from this Revery, this is after all but a ſlight and popular Objection, which from the Evil Conſequences which attend the Sins and Follies of the Multitude, and from thoſe Complaints which humane Infirmity has ſometimes wrung from the wiſe and vertuous, would unſoundly and illogically infer, that there is no ſuch thing as Happineſs here below: Beſides the Sufferings of Martyrs and the Words of St. *Paul* have been conſidered in the foregoing Chapter, and in the ſecond Chapter of this Section the Reader may find ſome Inſtances of Happy Men which is a punctual Anſwer to this Objection; but you will ſay 'tis a very ſhort one, to an Objection of ſo great weight and of ſuch general Credit, and ſpun out by me my ſelf to a very great length: I acknowledge it deſerves a fuller Anſwer, and therefore, after I have told you

you that I have made a ſhow of hunting after Happineſs in ſeveral conditions of Life, only to rally and expoſe their Folly who ſuppoſe it may be found in a lucky Juncture of Circumſtances, I will give you one.

The Men then whom I call Happy, are ſuch who are poſſeſſed of true and ſolid Goods, and thoſe ſuch which Fortune cannot give nor take away; ſuch were *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, and ſuch are all thoſe at this Day as are transformed into the Glory and Image of the Divine Nature by the mighty Energy of the Divine Spirit and Divine Truths. Let us conſider therefore what the ſtate of *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles was in this Life: I will not take notice of thoſe Ecſtatick Pleaſures which they felt when they did thoſe God-like Works which we call Miracles, what Triumph could be equal to theirs who ſaw Diſeaſes, Devils and Death ſubject to their Commands? What Joy could be equal to theirs, when they gave Life to the Dead, Sight to the Blind, Strength to the Lame, *&c.* To what a height was Wonder and Delight rais'd in each of theſe Performances? For nothing could be more wonderful than the Power, or delightful than the Charity conſpicuous in 'em:

'em: But this I pass over, because this Power is not to be attained by us: Let us come to that which is, I mean the Vertues of Christ and his Apostles; *He had not a hole where to lay his head*: 'tis true, but how truly great was he in himself? How much above the mean and unmanly desires of Ambition, Covetousness, or Lust? he indulg'd himself in no sensual Carnal Pleasures, 'tis true, but how Calm that Soul which no Angry or Envious Passion disturb'd, where nothing but sacred Love dwelt? The love of God, the love of Man, and the rational and wise love of himself? How Happy that Soul which was illuminated with Divine Knowledge, supported by an unshaken Faith, fill'd with joyful Reflections and glorious Hopes? That Soul which in the silence of the Night, and the Retirements of the Mount did pour forth it self in Prayers and Hallelujah's, that Soul which full of God and full of Heaven, had no room for uneasie Cares or afflicting Sorrows? 'Tis true, our Saviour met Death with pale looks and melancholy pangs of Soul; but 'tis as true, that his Faith surmounted his Fears, his Agony endured but for a little while an undisturb'd Peace, and a well-settled serenity of Mind immediately follow'd

low'd it, and his trouble and Pain in Death, like the Eclipſe that attended it, did but o'recaſt and darken the joy, the light within, not extinguiſh it: Who could finiſh the laſt Act of Life with more humble Majeſty, or with more ſettled Peace? In the Life and Death of our dear Lord we behold that of his Diſciples, for they were all followers of him, as they deſired we ſhou'd be of them: What can be happier than their ſtate here was? Their Life was Regular and Philoſophical, their Joy ſteady and Rational, their Love of God vigorous, their Charity to Man fervent and diffus'd; their Deſires, as to the World, modeſt; their Minds reſolved and brave in Afflictions, Chearful and Compos'd in Death it ſelf.

Let it ſtand then as an unſhaken Truth, That Happineſs may be attain'd in this Life: For what the Followers of our Lord and Maſter attain'd to, that may we; their Natural Paſſions and Infirmities were the ſame with ours, our Trials and Temptations are far leſs than theirs; we ſerve the ſame God, we are guided by the ſame Truths, ſupported by the ſame Power, elevated by the ſame Hopes; we have the ſame Peace bequeath'd us, the ſame Spirit, the ſame Heaven promiſed us, and

we

we march under the Conduct of the ſame Captain of our Salvation, who *by his Death has aboliſhed Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light.* Nor ought this to ſeem to us an over-daring or Preſumptuous Poſition, ſince the Poſſibility of Happineſs is a Notion Conſonant to the common ſenſe of all Mankind: For 'tis Happineſs which Laws, enacted for the Government of the Multitude, and Philoſophical Rules preſcrib'd for the Government of our Paſſions, do aim at; all Law-givers have ever promiſed the People Wealth, and Peace, and Glory, and Security, as the Fruits of their Obedience: And all Philoſophers have ever promis'd Tranquility of Mind and Rational Pleaſure to their Followers as the Rewards of Conformity to their Precepts: And as it cannot ſurely be denied, but that the Kingdom is moſt Happy, which by juſt Laws and a well-temper'd Authority, is freed from thoſe Fears and Diſtractions, from thoſe Miſchiefs and Confuſions to which others are expos'd by Anarchy or Tyranny, by the Inſolence of the Multitude, or the Impotence of the Prince: So it cannot be deny'd, but that the Man is moſt Happy, whoſe well-ſetled Peace is eſtabliſhed upon ſolid Grounds of true Wiſdom; being neither

oppreſſed

oppreſſed by the Tyranny of Superſtition, nor vexed and diſquieted by the Inſolence of unruly Paſſions, to which the weakneſs of *Reaſon* ſubjects Men. As to Religion, which is a third governing Principle, this only propoſes a more perfect Happineſs, and a more plain and direct way to it, than Nature of it ſelf could: It only relieves and recruits our Natural Power by that of Grace, and encreaſes the Light of Reaſon by a participation of new Rays of Revelation. If then, Happineſs be the great End which Law and Philoſophy, Revelation and Reaſon, God and Man, do unanimouſly propoſe to us, how abſurd and palpable a Contradiction were it to all theſe, to deny the Attainment of it poſſible?

The Concluſion of this Second Section.

To look back now upon this whole Section, and ſum up the ſubſtance and force of it, 'tis this: God who made us, made us on purpoſe to be Happy; for what other deſign could Infinite Love propoſe to it ſelf in our Creation? And propoſing to himſelf this End, he endow'd us with Faculties and Capacities that might fit us for the Contemplation and Enjoyment of himſelf, and his Works: The World provided by him for our Entertainment, he filled with

all

all things that could miniſter either to our Neceſſities or Delights: Here God has planted us, not as Inhabitants but Sojourners; for this is but our ſtate of Probation. Angels had their times of Trial, ſo have Men; here he would have us aſpire after, as near as we can, that Life Angels lead in Heaven; for we are one Day to be equal to them: Here he would have us learn and practice thoſe Vertues which fit us for the Society and Enjoyment of that Kingdom wherein dwells Righteouſneſs, for that is the bleſſed End and Conſummation of all our Endeavours, Deſires and Hopes; but when we make Heaven the Abode, the Seat of Perfect Happineſs, we do not thereby ſuppoſe that it is baniſhed from the Earth, but rather on the contrary, if that ſtate be the Conſummation of all things, 'tis neceſſarily to be concluded that every ſtep we advance nearer to it, we mount and aſcend higher, into brighter, calmer and purer Regions: Heaven is like a Glorious Building, whoſe acceſs is full of Delight and Beauty; for as that Youth which precedes our Manhood, has its Sweetneſs, its Beauty, its natural Perfection and Pleaſure; ſo has this Mortal ſtate which precedes our Angelical, its proper Degree of Perfection and Bleſſedneſs: And

this

this is no ſmall one neither, for as we are created but a little lower than the Angels in reſpect to the Dignity of our Nature, ſo ſurely our Happineſs begins nearly to approach and reſemble theirs: When our Mind fill'd with Divine Truths, Charity and Hopes becomes Free, Generous, Reſolv'd, Conſtant, Chearful, Meek, Gentle, Devout, Heavenly: When it has ſo accuſtom'd it ſelf to Vertue, and Familiarly acquainted it ſelf with Heaven, that the Sins and Pleaſures of the ſenſual part of the World look like the Manners and Entertainments, not only of a Foreign, but Barbarous and Impoveriſh't Countrey; and when laſtly by its frequent Retirements from the Body, and daily Commerce with Rational and Spiritual Pleaſures, it not only aſſerts its Soveraignty over it, but begins to live ſo independent of it, that at the laſt when it ſhall in Death mount up upon the Wings of pure Flame to Heaven, it ſhall not ſuffer as if the Body needed to be torn from it, but ſhall let it fall, as *Elijah* did his Mantle. Thoſe Complaints therefore which we make againſt our preſent ſtate, and thoſe Reproaches with which we outrage and vilifie our Nature, are falſe and unjuſt, for we are by God

God created and design'd for Happiness; and this Happiness God hath been pleas'd to put in our own Power to place within our reach: There is no Fate, but what God has made us our selves Arbiters of; we lye under no Necessity, no Fatality, but what our own Vices betray us to; Nor do we stand in need of the Indulgences of Fortune, the Tranquillity and Pleasure of a Vertuous Man is an Image of God's own; it springs from within, not from without: 'Tis true there are Difficulties which obstruct our Progress to Happiness; but they are such as all wise and good Men have Conquer'd: 'Tis true, Nature labours under its Infirmities, that is, sensual Propensions and Inclinations; but it is strengthened and supported by Reason, by Revelation, by Grace: We may fall ('tis true) a Sacrifice to God's Wrath, but it must be after we have lived long in Contempt of his Mercy, and obstinate Defyance of his Grace. Methinks these Considerations should raise and exalt the Mind of Man, they should inspire us with Desires and Hopes worthy of Rational and Immortal Souls, like the *Israelites* when they marched out of *Ægypt*, we should dream of nothing but Triumph, Glory and Happiness.

SECT. III.

SECT. III.

The Causes and Remedies of Man's Unsuccessfulness in his pursuit of Happiness.

CHAP. I.

The general Cause of Ill Success. Deviation from Reason, the general Cause of Man's ill Success. The Effects of which are, 1st. *The proposal of false ends.* 2d. *Coldness in pursuit of our true end.*

WERE the Happy, like **Tully's* Wise Man, a mere Idea something no where to be found but in the Characters and Descriptions which Philosophers give us of him, this were an unconquerable Discouragement: No Briskness of Wit, no Charms of Fancy, no Force of Eloquence, no height of Spirits or height of Confidence were sufficient to remove it, and to engage Men in such a desperate and unaccountable Enter-

* *Quem adhuc me quidem vidimus Neminem, sed Philosophorum sententiis qualis futuras sit si modo aliquando fuerit, exponitur.* Tusc. Quæst. l. 2.

terprize as this Supposition would render the pursuit of Happiness: For how fond and groundless a Presumption were it to pursue that which all Mankind had ever as Unsuccessfully as Earnestly and Indefatigably attempted? I have therefore endeavoured with all my might in the former Chapter to free Men's Minds from any Suspition or Fears of this Kind, answering all Objections that might seem to represent *Misery fatal*, or *Happiness unattainable*, and by undeniable proofs Confirming the Opposite Truth. But if this be true, that Happiness is attainable, and if it be as true, as certainly 'tis, that there needs no Eloquence to enkindle in any Man the Desires of Happiness, or to incite and spur him on to endeavour it's Attainment, all Mankind being carried on towards it by Natural, and therefore Constant and Passionate Inclinations; will it not be Natural to demand, Whence is it that so few are Happy? Whence is it that Misery and Trouble, Affliction and Sorrow fill almost every place and every Bosome? Not only no Kingdom or City, but no Town, no Village, no Family, I might almost add no one particular Person, being exempt and free; no Place or Person is privileged against Grief and Trouble, it invades

the Tribunal of Judges, the Thrones of Princes, and what is almost as sacred as either, the Recruitments and Closets of the Devout and Learned; nay scarcely is the Church and the Altar a secure Sanctuary against it.

This will not be difficult to Comprehend, if we do thoroughly weigh, and soberly consider the true Causes of Man's Misery; but the particular and distinct Discussion of each of these will fall in, in its proper place in the following Treatises, and therefore I shall Discourse of them here only generally and briefly, as the Nature of an Introduction requires.

Deviation from Reason the general Cause of Man's Misery.

Many are the particular Causes of Humane Misery, but they may *all* be reduced to this Universal and Immediate One, Namely, *That we do not live Conformable to our Reason,*

——*Quid enim Ratione timemus aut cupimus*——

When do our Affections spring from, or when are they governed by Reason? When are our Desires or Fears, our Joys or Sorrows Wise, and Just, and Rational and Holy? How frequently are our Actions nothing else but the brutish and blind Sallies of foolish Passions, and our lives are generally nothing else but the Wanderings

and Rambles of deluded Imaginations? How commonly do we act what we our selves Condemn? And how commonly doth the whole Course of our Lives displease our selves as much as others; and yet we live on in Contradiction to our Reason, and sometimes to our Inclinations too: How unlike are we in our Conversation to our selves in Retirement? How unlike are we in the Devotions of our Closets to our selves in the Employment of our several Professions? How calm, sedate, wise, holy, and resolved in the one? How anxious and unsafe, how foolish, earthy, and inconstant in the other? But in nothing does our Deviation from Reason more evidently appear than in two things.

This Deviation discovers it self.

First, In our proposing to our selves false and irrational Ends of Life; and *Secondly*, In our Insincerity in pursuing the true and rational one, *that* is Happiness.

1. *In false ends.*

As to the *First*, who sees not how the Life of Man is perverted, the force and tendency of Nature crook't and bow'd to designs utterly unsuitable to the Capacities and Faculties of a Rational Mind, and to the great End of our Creation? Who can look into the Life of Man, and not easily conclude that his chief Aim is Wealth and Greatness, not Happiness? Or which

is ſomething ſillier, that his deſign is ſome unneceſſary Accompliſhment, not Vertue and Goodneſs, or a vain Eſteem and popular Applauſe, not the Peace and Wiſdom of his Mind? Who ſees not how greedily Men purſue thoſe ſenſual Satisfactions, which naturally tend to enſlave the Soul, and to extinguiſh the rational Pleaſure and Vigour of our Minds? In a word, Wealth, and Honour, and Power, and Pleaſure are the Idols of Mankind: theſe are the things for which they live, for which they love and value Life: Theſe are the glorious Poſſeſſions which enflame our Emulations and our Induſtry; theſe are the things which the Unfortunate man Envys, and the Fortunate Honours, theſe are the things which diſtinguiſh and diſcriminate Mankind into their ſeveral Ranks and Degrees, the Contempt or Eſteem of the World, the Reſpects and Affronts, the Love and Hate of Mankind being ever proportion'd to the Degrees of Wealth and Power which they fancy others poſſeſſed of. To theſe noble Ends the ſage and experienced Parent trains up his young ones, inſtilling daily into 'em all the ſubtile Maxims of Covetouſneſs and Ambition, and judging of their Proficiency and Hopefulneſs by the Progreſs they make towards theſe Ends,

that is, the more enslav'd they are, the more Hopeful, the more promising is their Youth.

2. Coldness in pursuit of our true end.

Nor are Men more zealous in pursuing the false, than cold and insincere in pursuing the true Ends of Life, Vertue and Happiness. This is too too Evident to any one who shall consider how fond we are of our Diseases and our Errors, how impatient of that Instruction, or Reproof which tends to cure, undeceive and disabuse us, how sluggish we are in the study of Important Truths, how listless and remiss in the use of those means which conduce to Vertue, to the freeing our Minds, and to the Confirming our Resolutions: and therefore lastly how light, wavering and inconstant we are in the Practice of those things which Right Reason convinces us to be our Duty.

CHAP. II.

CHAP. II.

The particular and immediate Cauſe of Ill Succeſs.

Three more particular and immediate Cauſes of Ill Succeſs Aſſigned. 1ſt. *The Frame and Contexture of Humane Nature.* 2d. *Vitious Education.* 3d. *Vitious Converſation, the natural Effects of which are,* 1ſt. *Inconſiderateneſs,* 2d. *Falſe Notions,* 3d. *Ungovernableneſs and Impotency of Will.* 4th. *Inſincerity,* 5th. *Levity and Inconſtancy: The whole Exemplified.*

ALL this that I have ſaid in the former Chapter is plain and evident, we ſee and feel it and bemoan it, but yet we live on in the ſame manner ſtill; whence therefore is this Infatuation of our Underſtanding that enſlaves us to falſe and irrational Ends? Whence is that Impotence of Mind; whence is that Inſincerity that deludes our Deſires, and produces nothing but feeble and unſucceſsful Endeavours? Neither is this a difficult Matter to diſcover; that we live and act irrationally proceeds evidently from *three* Cauſes. *Firſt,*

The Contexture and Frame of our Nature, *Secondly*, A Vitious Education. *Thirdly*, Vitious Converſation.

The Contexture of Nature the firſt Cauſe of an Irrational Life.

The *Firſt* ſpring or ſource of Irrational Deſires and Actions is the Contrivance and Compoſition of our Nature: Our ſenſual and bruitiſh Appetites have their Foundation in our Natural Conſtitution as well as our rational Affections; for we are made up of Body as well as Soul; Hence is it that there is in Man a doubtful fluctuation and indetermination to different Objects, the Reaſon of the Mind, and the Appetite of the Body diſtracting and dividing him by their different Propoſals. The Impreſſions of Senſe and Repreſentations of Reaſon ſucceſſively awakening in him very different and generally very contrary Deſires; whereas Angels by the Perfection, and Beaſts by the Imperfection of their Nature are determin'd and confin'd to their Proper and Neceſſary Objects; Man is left to a ſtrange uncertainty, undetermined by the Reaſon of the Mind, or the Inſtinct or Appetite of the Body, moved indeed ſucceſſively by each, perfectly governed and over-ruled by neither. But it were well for Man that the Inclinations of theſe two different Principles were ſo juſtly pois'd, that he were naturally left in

a true Liberty and pure Indifference equally able to follow the Dictates of Reason, and the Appetites of Flesh and Blood: But alas! How Impetuous are the Lusts of the Body! How Irresistible are those Passions which the Objects of Sense aided by a Carnal Imagination raise in us! On the other side, how Cold are the Representations of Reason, when we most need it's Assistance and Authority! How faint and feeble the Natural Inclination of the Soul to what is truly good and great! How remote and distant the Rewards of Vertue, and consequently how weak and cold their Influence, and how faint and imperfect is the Pleasure that attends it abstracted from future Rewards in all other Minds besides those who are arrived in some sort at Perfection! 'Tis true, at some Seasons, and upon some Occasions the Remonstrances of Conscience are so sharp, its Reproaches so bitter, the Disdain and Confusion of the Mind, so unsufferable that they render that which is a Pleasure to the Sense, a Torment to the Soul, and its agreeableness to our Imagination cannot make amends for its Harshness and Contradiction to our Reason. But alas! These are but short-lived Fits which soon pass over; for Business diverts, Pleasure inchants, and repea-

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ted Violence offer'd to our Reason ſtupifies and deadens the Natural Conſcience, and what is worſe than all this, a ſilly and vitious Education does generally ſo corrupt our Judgments, and prepoſſeſs us with vain and fooliſh Affections, that the Checks of Conſcience are Extremely ſeldom and extreamely faint, unleſs the Commiſſion of ſome groſs Sin do awaken it by a Deep and Deadly Wound. This is,

Education a ſecond Cauſe of Man's Miſery.

2. A ſecond Cauſe of that general Apoſtaſie and Defection from Reaſon ſo notorious in the World, *A ſilly and vitious Education.* How well does it fare with Children when they derive only their Original Corruption from their Parents? Ah! How often are their weak Diſpoſitions to Vice nurs'd and cheriſhed by their Parents into an Abſolute, uncontroulable and ſetled Tyranny. Nay, what is worſe yet, how often are the ſeeds of Vertue, thoſe towardly Diſpoſitions which many bring into the World with 'em chouked and ſtifled, not only by the neglect, not only by the Indulgence, but even by the Example and Authority of Parents?

Juven. Sat. 14.

——Velocius & Citius nos
Corrumpunt Vitiorum Exempla Domeſtica, magnis

Cum

Cum subeant animos Autoribus — coitus.

Ah, with what speed must the Infection spread,
When Youth by Parents Crimes are warranted,
And Tempted on to Sin!

When Corrupt Inclination is ripen'd into a second Nature, when our innate Weaknesses and Follies are confirm'd by those false Principles, and that vitious Confidence which we derive from Education, then we are sent into the World, left to our own disposal, abandon'd to our own Government: Poor Creatures! Not only expos'd unarm'd, unguarded, to Temptations, but like *Sampson* to the *Philistines* tied and bound too: Ah! Could we so easily burst our Bonds as he did his! But whence should we recover our lost Liberty?

Conversation, instead of being an Assistance to us in our Endeavours after Happiness, doth generally tend to promote our Misery; Philosophy is not now the business of Conversation, nor is Friendship any way useful or serviceable to the great end of Life: the Ligament of Society is Riot and Revelling, or sordid Profit and Interest, or peradventure folly, trifling, and impertinence: Thus'd are the ties and bonds of our Confe- *Conversation a Third.*

deracies

deracies; so that whatever Authority our Friends and Acquaintance have over us, whatever Influence they have upon us, is imployed to no other purpose but to recommend and endear Vice to us, to render it, if not beatiful and lovely to us, at leastwise less deformed and ugly than it is: Hence it is that retirement is so generally recommended to those who design to make any progress in true Wisdom, and that such as are truly vertuous do so passionately complain of the Disadvantages they suffer by Conversing with the World. For the truth is, Wisdom and Goodness are such unfashionable Theams of Discourse, such unusual, nay, I may add, unwelcom Subjects of Entertainment, that the Company deserves now to be prais'd, which is only barren and unprofitable, not hurtful, and wherein we suffer no greater loss than that of our time.

The Effects of these three.

It is now easie to imagine what fruit a Corrupt Nature must bring forth, when not only left destitute of Necessary Cultivation, but depraved yet more by a vitious Education, and vitious Conversation; what can all these together bring forth, but a loathsom brood of Diseases and Vices such as these, Rashness, Precipitancy, Heedlesness, and Unthoughtfulness, False Notions,

Notions, Ungovernableneſs and Impotence of *Will*, Inſincerity, Levity and Inconſtancy, which are the Plagues of Humane Life, and the fatal Obſtacles of our Tranquility? For either they obſtruct our true Happineſs by preventing our ſearch after it; or delude our ſearch by Corrupting and Perverting our Underſtanding; or elſe they fruſtrate and defeat the Influence of its Diſcovery by Obſtinate Reluctances in the Body, and an Unhappy Impotence in the Mind: All this is manifeſt upon the moſt tranſient glance we can take, of theſe Particulars. To begin with *Want of Conſideration*: This is a Neceſſary Effect of that Corruption and Depravation which I have aſcribed to Nature, Education, and Converſation; the Body unaccuſtomed to obey is Impatient of Deliberation when its Pleaſure is in view, and a taking Imagination over-rules whatever weak Plea Reaſon makes; Nay, what is worſe, the very diſuſe of Reaſon in Men abandon'd to the Conduct of Cuſtom, and ſway'd by the Enticement of Inclination, and Authority of Example, bereaves 'em almoſt of the Faculty it ſelf: So that their Life and Actions are not the Effects of Judgment and Deliberation; but injudicious, unweigh'd Cuſtom; or more raſh, heedleſs and

Inconſideration.

and precipitant Paſſion. And can any Man think, that when the meaneſt Art or Profeſſion is not learned without Right Inſtruction or Juſt Diligence, Wiſdom the great Art of Living Happily ſhould be attained without as much as juſt Conſideration? When a Man cannot grow Rich or Proſperous without Contrivance and Induſtry, is it probable he ſhould grow Happy by Inadvertency and Chance? It is impoſſible.

False Notions.

For Innumerable will be the falſe and pernicious Notions which ſuch a one corrupted and depraved, raſh and unadvis'd muſt be betray'd into and confirm'd in, there is no Principle ſo falſe, no Practice ſo abſurd which ſuch do not readily entertain: Hence 'tis that Man do ſo generally live by Rote, that Men's Principles are the faſhionable ones of the Neighbourhood or Nation, that their manner of Life takes that ſhape which their Rank and Quality, and the Chance of their Converſation gives it: And their very Religion it ſelf is the Native Commodity of the Soil they are planted in; Hence 'tis finally that Men are Unrighteous and Wicked, careleſs and unconcerned, notwithſtanding all the Calls or Invitations, all the Rewards and Manaces of the Goſpel, Convictions of Conſcience, Impulſes of Grace, Mercies, Threats and Judg-

Judgments of God: And Covetouſneſs, Luxury, Uncleanneſs, Prophaneneſs, Ambition are as conſtantly practis'd in Court and City as condemned in the Pulpit and Preſs; nor is it to be expected otherwiſe, for falſe Notions give Countenance and Authority to our Follies, and fortifie us in all our wretched Miſcarriages againſt the Aſſaults of Law and Reaſon, of Conſcience and God himſelf: No Condition is ſo deſperately forlorn as that of Sin and Folly, back'd and authorized by Inveterate Principles! Theſe render our very Induſtry not only uſeleſs and unſerviceable, but even fatal and deſtructive to our Happineſs: Theſe defeat the very tendency of our Nature towards Happineſs, and turning it into a wrong Channel, make it run with Violence toward our Miſery:

Ungovernableneſs and Impotence of Will.

Theſe help to render our Paſſions both numerous and ungovernable by preſenting ſome things as Evils which are not, and by augmenting real Evils beyond their Natural proportion: And herein conſiſt the very Eſſence and *being* of humane Miſery, or at leaſt a part of it, when our own Folly encreaſes both the Number and Weight of Evils, and our numberleſs Paſſions do exceed all juſt and natural bounds: And this is a Conſtant Truth, the leſs Underſtanding

ing there is in any Man, the more violent is his Passion, the Passion of a Fool being like the Zeal of a Bigot, the more blind, the more furious. All this makes good the Observation of the Poet,

Hor. l. 1. Ep. 16. *Non qui Sidonio contendere callidus Ostro,*
Nescit Aquinatem potentia vellera fucum,
Certius accipiet Damnum; propiusque Medullis,
Quam qui non poterit vero distinguere falsum.

Not the Deluded Trader who doth buy
Counterfeit Aquin for the Tyrian dye,
His Folly shall more surely or dearly rue,
Than he who does false Notions take for true.

Insincerity. Insincerity is another fruit of the Corruption of our Nature, and the Depravation of Education and Conversation. This is that which makes us Lazy in our search after Truth, and Partial in the Examination of our Opinions and Actions; for when the bent of our Nature runs towards Carnal Pleasures, and this is Confirm'd by Education and false Notices of things, we shall be apt to take up and caress our selves with present, easie and ready Entertainments. We shall not extend our Care or Prospect very far, but be Content

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to enjoy the sweet in every present Circumstance and Event, without Regard to their future tendency, which was the Happiness (if my memory deceive me not) of the *Cyrenaics*: The same distemper prevaling, we shall be apt to think every thing healthful that is pleasant, and easily admit those Principles most true, which are most grateful to our Appetites. 'Tis not therefore to be wondred at, if the same Humour which makes us greedy of Embracing, make us obstinate in defending pleasing Errours. For the same fondness and partiality renders us incapable of Instruction and Impatient of Advice, tho designed by the most faithful Affection, and managed with the most Prudent Tenderness.

Fidit offendar Medicis, Iraſcar amicis, Hor. l. 1. Ep. 8.
Cur me funeſto properant arcere veterno?
Quæ nocuere ſequar, fugiam quæ profore credam.

The Plainness of Physicians and of Friends,
Tho by Affection movid and Truth offends;
Can't I enjoy my fatal Rest for you?
Let me alone my Ruine to pursue,
And fly my Happiness. ——

It is easie now to judge what must be the state of that Man who is insincere and false

to himself in all his Deliberations, and Obstinate in the Defence of his Errors, who is partial in all his own Reflections, and Impatient of the faithful Reflections of others; how is it probable that that Man should attain to any Rational Happiness who is uncapable of using his own Reason aright, or enjoying the benefit of another's.

Levity and Inconstancy.

But 'tis not the only Mischief we suffer by these Diseases of the Mind that they render us uncapable of Discovering true Happiness, they do also disable us to pursue it when discovered with that earnestness and vigour which the Importance of the thing requires; for they must needs beget in us a slothful Remisness in our Endeavours, and an unhappy Levity and Inconstancy in all our Designs and Purposes: 'Tis very improbable that we should be steady and immoveable in those purposes which are not founded upon clear and solid Reason, or zealous in such as are encountred with violent Opposition from our selves: * Hence 'tis that the Scenes of Man's Life are so various, so frequently changed, that every Man does so often shift his Person, and ap-

* *Quidam alterum Vitiis, alterum Catenis; & modo parum illis Severus est Curius, parum pauper Fabricius, parum frugi & contentus vili Tubero. Modo Licinus Divitiis, Apicium Cenis, Mecenatem deliciis provocant. Maximum Judicium est mala mentis Fluctuatio, & inter simulationem Virtutum, amoremque Vitiorum, assidua jactatio,* Sen. Epist. cxx.

appear a very different Actor on the Stage. Thus we meet with *Epicurean* and *Stoick*, *Clergy-man* and *Merchant*, *Devoto* and *Stateſman*, *Enthuſiaſt* and *Paraſite*, all acted in their turn by the ſelf-ſame Man; who is toſſed to and fro by the ſudden Sallies or Guſts of various Deſires and Paſſions. Nor is it any Man's Wit or Sagacity that turns him into all theſe different ſhapes, but his Vice and Folly, for Being ignorant of the true good, the true Happineſs of Man, he catches at fleeting Shadows, and Courts thin airy Dreams, and uncertain Apparitions; and therefore daily ſets up new Projects, and thoſe too, repugnant to the Old: And thus, Man wearieth out himſelf by vain and unſucceſsful, becauſe unconſtant vaniſhing Attempts. This were tolerable, did it befall us only in Temporal things, whoſe Emptineſs makes our ſucceſs it ſelf fruſtration and diſappointment; but alas we ſuffer the ſame thing in the weighty Concerns of Vertue and Happineſs, our Religious purpoſes do generally die ſtrangled in the Birth, and all our glorious Deſigns daſh and break themſelves to pieces againſt the next Difficulty or Temptation; and yet relapſed into a ſtate of Folly, and Sin, and Danger, we would again return to that narrow Path whoſe ſteep and rough

aſcent diſcouraged us; wandring in Night, and Fogg and Storm, fain would we reach the Happy Region where calm light and chearful day does ever dwell: Plainly and without a Metaphor, when we reſolve to be good and vertuous, we are kept from it by the ſeeming Eaſe and Pleaſure of Sin, and the hardſhips neceſſary to be undergone in the attainment of Vertue; and yet the Remorſe, and Danger, and Diſſatisfaction which do always accompany a Negligent and Sinful Life, make us wiſh for the Peace and Comfort, the Security and Rewards of Vertue. But Oh! How ſeldom do we proceed further than wiſhes or ſome Attempts more lazy and diſ-ſpirited than our Wiſhes! The Reaſon's plain, Vertue is more Rational, Vice is more grateful; the Underſtanding is convinc'd, but the Will is enſlaved; *The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh.* A Sinner cannot purchaſe the Pleaſures of the Mind, but by ſome uneaſie Penances, and Severities of the Body, nor enjoy the Pleaſures of the Body without the Checks and Reproaches of the Mind: and this makes him unſteady and irreſolute in all his purpoſes. Would you ſee an Inſtance of the whole Matter? You feel it better than I can deſcribe it, and yet 'tis

The Whole exemplifi'd.

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not difficult to make a tolerable Repreſentation of that which I have in my ſelf often proved and often bewailed. Nor can I ſee, why I ſhould bluſh to own thoſe frailties which are ſo incident to Humane Nature, that the greateſt Glory and Happineſs of mortal Man is not to have been never ſubject to 'em, but to have conquered 'em.

One while moved by the gaze and wonder, the reſpect and reverence, with which the World treats greatneſs, and by thoſe Opportunities of Pleaſure which I ſaw Wealth and Power put into Men's hands: I reſolved to rouze all the Strength, to imploy all the Force and Power of Mind and Body for the Attainment of Wealth and Greatneſs. I flatter'd my ſelf, I knew how to merit, nor did I think my ſelf uncapable of Practiſing all the ſubtil humble Arts of Candidates and Dependents, could I once prevail with my ſelf to ſtoop to 'em: But when the toil and difficulty and meanneſs too of this attempt had given me a little diſguſt; and the Pleaſures of Friendſhip and Fortune, (by neither of which have I ever been utterly deſerted) incountred my Natural Inclinations to eaſe, and ſoftneſs, I ſoon exchanged my former Notion of Happineſs for a more calm and quiet one; I began to think it wiſe to live

to day, and to prefer my present Blessings, in Possession before the uncertain future ones of Opinion and Expectation. I wished for an Opportunity to retire from every thing that might awaken my Ambition, or interrupt my quiet, and thought that in a lazy shade, and obscure retreat, I might with most freedom and truest Contentment enjoy my self, a cheap pleasure, and an humble Friend, and laugh at the Ambitious restless part of Mankind.

Sometimes springing a thought of light, and lost in the Pleasure of a Speculation, I have resolved to devote my self intirely to a Studious Life, I ador'd the Memory of those great Souls whose Works have given them an Immortality here below; I looked upon the Learned (as *Epicurus* words it) as Gods amongst Men, I did not question but Contemplation which once seemed to me to be the Business of Angels, must needs be the Joy and Delight of Man, but alas! That I must say it, all that Learning which is purchased with toil and difficulty is but a vain, uncertain Amusement of the Mind, it has much of Pomp and Ostentation in it, but is of very little use; I would it were not true, that those parts of Learning which are of most Use have least of Certainty and Demonstration, and those which can justly pre-

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tend to moſt Certainty make Men the worſt Return of their Studies, and are of leaſt uſe. I have obſerved accordingly that the moſt Learned are not always the moſt ſerviceable to the World, not only for this Reaſon, but alſo Thoughtfulneſs and Retirement rendring Men very commonly as unfit for as averſe to Buſineſs, bereaving them of that Sufficiency and Skill, that Addreſs and preſence of Mind, which is not to be gained but by Converſation and Experience: And it was eaſie for me to remark that the active and buſie Man was not only more Skilful, but more Eloquent too than the Contemplative, as having a much clearer inſight into the Humours and Paſſions of Men, and the ſecret Springs and Intereſts by which they are moved, and being able to manage 'em with a more popular Dexterity and more cleanly, gentile Inſinuation. And now I began to eſteem of Learning as a pretty Ornament of Life, but not fit to be the ſupport of it, I thought it might ſerve to fill the void and empty ſpaces, but not to be the Buſineſs and Imployment of it.

I have been ſometimes raviſhed with the Beauty of a Noble Action, and reſolved to lead a Life Severe and Vertuous, ſpent, not in private Eaſe, and lazy Diverſions,

but it the Honour and Pleaſure of doing good. But good God! How weak is Nature! How ſlight are ſuch Impreſſions! How numerous the Temptations; how prevalent the Inclinations which carry us another way.

This has been a long time my ſtate, toſſed on uncertain Seas, and hoyſing Sail to every Wind that blew, and I find that neither greatneſs of Mind nor Fortune doth raiſe Men above this Inconſtancy. For I meet with my own Reflections, my own Paſſions in the Excellent * *Seneca*; only the Character of himſelf he there preſents us with, is expreſſed with more life and briskneſs, and exalted as much above this of mine, as was the Nature and Station of that great Man above mine. I cannot ſay that I have yet made my Port, but I have diſcover'd it, and I ſail tho ſlowly, yet in a direct Line, having my Happineſs, *my Heaven*, all along in ken.

* *De Tranquilitate animi.*

CHAP. III.

CHAP. III.

The Cure of the former Maladies.

Conformity to Reaſon the general Cure. This Conformity muſt appear in two Things.
1. *In the propoſal, or right and true Ends.*
2. *In the purſuit of them with Zeal and Conſtancy. Inferr'd from all how we are to treat the Body. What our Education. What our Converſation ought to be.*

FRom this Account of the Riſe and Progreſs of Man's Miſery, 'tis eaſie to inſer what it is, wherein the Happineſs of this preſent life conſiſts, or at leaſt what the Univerſal and Immediate Cauſe of it is, namely a Conformity of our Minds and Lives to true Reaſon and ſound Philoſophy; this is a ſtate of Light and Knowledge, of Peace and Security, of laſting and rational Delight. This inveſts the Underſtanding in its juſt Soveraignty and Dominion, and reſtores the *Will* to it's true Liberty, this makes our proſpect of the future, taking and inviting, and our Reflection on the time paſt, eaſie and comfortable. This lays a ſolid foundation for our Reliance on the Merits and Interceſſion of our Mediator, and raiſes our Hope as High as Heaven; this prevents *The Nature or Univerſal and Immediate Cauſe of Happineſs Inferr'd.*

vents our Misfortunes and Calamities, or, what is more Happy, enables us to Conquer 'em: In a word, this makes us great in Life, but much more great and venerable in Death, Righteousness and Goodness revealing its Beauty and Glory most then, when all things else do shrink and fade.

Two general Rules for attaining Happiness infer'd.

We see the Happiness that springs from our Conformity and Subjection to Reason, and 'tis easie from those two things wherein especially I have declar'd the Sinners Deviation from Reason to consist, to infer, what we must do, if we will live Rationally, 1. First, *We must propose to our selves a Wise and Rational End of Life.* 2. Secondly, *We must pursue this End with Life, and Spirit, and Constancy.* These I lay down as the first and most Comprehensive Rules for the Attainment of Happiness: I will therefore say something of each, but briefly and in general terms as the Nature of this Treatise requires.

First, We must propose to our selves a Rational and Wise End of Life; that is, the true Happiness of a Rational Creature: When we have done this, when our Understandings are fully convinc'd and perswaded of the Excellence and Necessity of it, and when we have possessed our Minds with a sacred Reverence, a firm and devout Love for it; This like the Eastern Star

Star the *Magi*, will lead us through all the windings and turnings of this Life to *Bethlehem* and Happineſs; this will ſoon diſengage us from that *Labyrinth* of Contradictous Deſires and wild Opinions, in which the Fool and Sinner is endleſly entangled. When we have done this, we ſhall find every place a School, every own we Converſe with a Tutor, and every paſſage of our Life, or another's full of Inſtruction: Nor a look whether Chearful or Melancholy; not a word whether wiſe or fooliſh; nor a Sigh that an oppreſſed Heart vents, not a Joy that ſmiles in the Face but will teach us Philoſophy; ſhew us the Uſe and Beauty of Divine Truth and Divine Vertue; for in the Vicious, we ſhall ſee what falſe and fading Pleaſures, what idle Fears what vain ſorrows, falſe Principles, and the Tyranny of Sin fills their Minds with; in the Good we ſhall ſee what true Peace, Vertue creates in the Mind, what Conſtancy and Majeſty in the Life, what Courage and Hopes it inſpires in Affliction, what Magnanimity and Humility in Proſperity; and in a word what light, what Serenity it diffuſes through the whole Man: we ſhall ſee in many Inſtances every Day, what the Miſchief of irrational Deſires and ungovernable Paſſions are; and on the contrary, how great the Advantages, how Charming

ing the the Beauty of Truth and Vertue, of Wiſdom and Due Government and Regulation of all our Paſſions; nor is the Inſtruction and Illumination of our Underſtanding promoted by every Accident which falls under our Obſervation, and by all ſorts of People, with whom we converſe: The only Advantage which we ſhall reap from the perfixing our ſelves a Rational End of Life, and the poſſeſſing our Souls with the Love of it; for when we have done this, we ſhall be actually freed from the greater part at leaſt of the Troubles and Calamities of Life; we ſhall be raiſed above all ſenſeleſs ſilly Deſires, and conſequently above all ſenſeleſs, ſilly Vexations and Griefs, and unmanly Complaints: For when we have ſet our Hearts upon true and Rational Happineſs, how unneceſſary, nay how deſpicable will moſt of thoſe things appear which we now admire and covet: We ſhall not then think it reaſonable to ſigh and toil for this Houſe or that Land, for this Preferment or that Trade, this Honour or that Beauty, for theſe are no Eſſential, no Neceſſary Ingredients of a Rational Happineſs. Nor is this all, thy Joys and Pleaſures will grow and increaſe upon thee; for by approaching every day nearer and nearer to thy great End, thou wilt be wonderfully ſurprized with freſh Delight, whilſt

thou

thou do'ſt behold the fruit of thy Travel, the Advantage of thy Philoſophy, and the daily increaſe of thy Wealth: Thou wilt ſee thy ſelf like a thriving Plant grow up daily more ſtrong and beautiful: the toil of others ſorts to no Happy End; The Covetous Man grows not richer by heaping up, nor the Ambitious Man greater by riſing higher, or at leaſt neither grows Happier by being either Richer or Greater; but thou wilt every day grow wiſer by ſtudy, more Vertuous by Practice, Calmer and Happier by both. O to what a height and perfection will thy Pleaſure riſe, when thy ſtore ſhall grow big enough to Feaſt and Entertain not thy ſelf only, but all Men elſe; when the Thirſty ſhall come and drink at thy Streams, and the Scorched ſhall refreſh themſelves under thy ſhade; when thou led by the ſame ſpirit with our great Lord and Maſter ſhalt open the Eyes of the Blind, and the Ears of the Deaf, ſhalt caſt out Devils, and ſtrengthen the Feet of the Lame; I mean, when thou ſhalt teach the fooliſh Wiſdom, when thou ſhalt perſwade and charm the Obſtinate, when thou ſhalt deliver the Unclean and the Paſſionate from the Evil Spirits, the Vices that poſſeſſed them, and when thou ſhalt teach the Enſlaved and Impotent Sinner, how to overcome the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, thou wilt

then

then indeed, as thou art the Image, ſo to the Works of God, thou wilt be a Heavenly and Tutelar tho mortal Angel amongſt Men; and wherever *thou* doſt, there *Wiſdom*, *Vertue*, and *Happineſs* will dwell too. But to attain to this ſtate, 'tis not only Neceſſary to prefix our ſelves a Rational End of Life; But alſo.

Secondly, We muſt purſue this End with Life, and Spirit, and Conſtancy. It is not a good Fit or a Devout Paſſion that will make us either Vertuous or Happy, there muſt go more than this to conquer an ill habit, or implant a good one; 'tis not one brisk Sally, or one warm Charge that will ſubdue the World and Fleſh, and put us into an entire Poſſeſſion of Victory and Security; No, when warmth and Paſſion have made a proſperous Impreſſion on the Enemy, a ſober Patience muſt make good the ground we have gained, a ſteady and reſolved Courage muſt urge and preſs the Advantage to an Iſſue; without Vigour, Patience and Conſtancy to carry us ſtill forwards, the Warmth and Paſſion with which we begin the Courſe of Vertue, will ſtand us in little ſtead; Ah! How many have marched out of *Ægypt*, and Periſhed in the Wilderneſs? How many have wrecked within ſight of Shore? How many have have loſt their Reward of Repentance by their Relapſe and Revolt?

Revolt? How many have fallen by Negligence, Security, and Sloth, into that wretched ſtate, out of which they had once delivered themſelves by Courage, Reſolution and Self-denial? Nor is the *Neceſſity* of Vigour, Patience, and Conſtancy, in our purſuit of Happineſs, the only Motive to it; the *Certainty of Succeſs* and the *Greatneſs* and *Eminence* of the Advantages, which attend it, are ſufficient to animate and encourage any Man that ſeriouſly Conſiders it: The Labour and Hope of the Husbandman is loſt, unleſs the fruitful Earth, and fruitful Seed be bleſs'd with fruitful Seaſons too; the Trade of the Merchant is properly but Adventuring, and his increaſe depends as much on Winds, and Waves, and other as uncertain Chances, as on his own Skill and Diligence: Fortune muſt aſſiſt the Courage and the Conduct of the Soldier, or elſe Poverty & Diſhonour will be the only purchaſe of his Blood and Hazard; But it fares not thus with Man in his purſuit of Happineſs, the Traffick of the Philoſopher depends not upon Winds nor Tide, the Seeds of Vertue, if the Ground be well Cultivated, will thrive in any Weather, and ſometimes better in Storms than Sunſhine, and finally the ſucceſs of our Conflicts againſt Sin and Miſery depends not on our Fortune, but our Courage and our Induſtry.

How

How unſpeakable a Pleaſures is it now to think that we cannot be diſappointed in our Travails, nor defeated of our Hopes, while we labour for Vertue and Happineſs, if our Endeavours be ſincere and perſevering, our ſucceſs is certain and unqueſtionable: But what an acceſſion doth this Pleaſure receive when we conſider, what will be the glorious fruit of this Succeſs, Tranquility, Chearfulneſs, Greatneſs and Enlargement of Soul, Indolence, Peaſure, Life, Immortality, Security, and in one word Happineſs. O Glorious reward of our Conflict and our Victories! What neither Wealth nor Greatneſs, nor Honour, nor Crowns; what neither Blood nor Toil, nor Cunning nor Fortune can give! That Rational and ſincere Endeavours after Wiſdom and Vertue will give the meaneſt Man upon Earth, that is, *Happineſs!* O Bleſſed Iſſue of Philoſophical, that is, truly Chriſtian Travel! the Rich, the Great, the Honourable, the Mighty may complain even of their ſucceſs, and repent them of the Purchaſe they have made at too dear a Rate; but the Philoſopher, the Chriſtian can never repent of the ſucceſs of his Study, his Self-denial, his Patience, his Prayers: For how is it poſſible to complain of being Happy, or repent of being Wiſe and Vertuous? There is nothing Empty, nothing Evil, nothing Mean, nothing Uncertain in true Wiſdom, in Rational Happineſs.

This

This brief and general Account of Happineſs, and of the Way to it, does naturally inſtruct us how we are to treat the *Body*, and what it is that a *Rational Education*, and *Wiſe Converſation* ought to deſign and aim at: if our Conformity to Reaſon be either the Happineſs of this preſent Life, or the immediate Cauſe of it, (for I will not trouble my ſelf with nice and ſubtil Diſtinctions in Moral Diſcourſes) then 'tis plain that we are obliged to ſuch a kind of Diſcipline and Government of our ſelves, as may render the Body moſt obſequious to the Mind, and may exalt and eſtabliſh the Power and Dominion of Reaſon: for whatever tends to obſcure our Underſtanding, to enfeeble the Will, to cheriſh our ſenſual Inclinations, and augment their Force and Violence, doth ſo far neceſſarily tend to deprave the Nature of Man, and to ſubvert and o'rethrow his Happineſs; and from hence it appears that the Excellence of Education conſiſts in poſſeſſing the Minds of Youth with wiſe Principles, with true Notions of Good and Evil, and informing and moulding their Minds into an Eſteem and Veneration for Wiſdom and Vertue. The firſt Vertue I conceive a Child capable of is Obe-

dience, and this is indeed the Foundation of all Vertue: To this let him be inur'd and trained up betimes: he that finds it eaſy to obey another's Reaſon, will not find it difficult to obey his own; for when the Judgment comes to be form'd and ripen'd, when it comes to exerciſe its Authority, it will find a Body not us'd to give, but receive Commands. From this Vertue of Obedience he is to be led gently on to a rational and voluntary Choice of what is Good; he muſt be taught gradually, not only his plain Duty, but the Motives to it; for it is as neceſſary to his Happineſs that he ſhould love, as that he ſhould know his Duty. But this we ſtrive in vain to inſtil by Art and Inſtruction, if we do not inſtil it by the Influence and Authority of wiſe and excellent Examples too.

As to Converſation 'tis plain, that it ought to be the Practice of thoſe Vertues which a pious Education inſtill'd; and that we ought to have no leſs Reverence for our Reaſon, when we are at our own Diſpoſal, and under our own Government, than we had for the Authority of our Parents when we were under theirs: What ought to be the Tie

and

and Ligaments of Friendſhip, what the Rules of Converſation, and what the great Ends of Society, is abundantly manifeſt from the Nature of that Happineſs which it behoves us to propoſe as the great End of Life; what is the great End of Man, ought to be the Deſign of Society: and therefore 'tis plain that Wiſdom and Vertue ought to be the Foundation and Bond of thoſe Friendſhips which we enter into, voluntary and of Choice; that Converſation ſhould be ſo regulated, that we may grow by it more Wiſe and Vertuous; or at leaſt that our Diſcourſe, if it be not profitable, ſhould be innocent, and that we ſhould do and ſay nothing in Company which we ſhould have reaſon to bluſh at, or repent of in private.

I have now finiſhed this Diſcourſe, which I deſigned only as an Introduction to, or Preparative for thoſe which are to follow: I do not think that 'tis now neceſſary for me, in a Pathetick Concluſion, to perſwade Men to endeavour to be *Happy*. The Deſires of Happineſs are inſeparable from all Beings, at leaſt-wiſe 'tis impoſſible to be Rational, and not deſire to be Happy. If I have therefore ſufficiently proved

that

that 'tis possible to be Happy; and if I have shew'd that a diligent Enquiry, a vigorous and persevering Industry is necessary to the Attainment of it; if I have pointed out the general Causes of Humane Misery, and together with them their general Cure and Remedy, I have done enough to enkindle those Desires, and beget those Resolutions in my Reader, which if they do not make him actually Happy, will at least dispose and prepare him for a further Enquiry after Happiness, which was the utmost Design of these Papers. I have therefore nothing more to put him in mind of now but this, That as I do all along suppose the Grace of God necessary to second and enforce our Reason, so I would ever be understood to urge and press the Necessity of our Prayers, as much as that of our Endeavours, the Fervency of the one, as much as the Sincerity of the other.

FINIS.